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STORIES BY ENGLISH AUTHORS

SCOTLAND

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THE COURTING OF T'NOW-HEAD'S BELL . . . . . By J. M. Barrie
"THE HEATHER LINTIE" . . By S. R. Crockett
A DOCTOR OF THE OLD SCHOOL, By Ian Maclaren
WANDERING WILLIE'S TALE . By Sir Walter Scott
THE GLENMUTCHKIN RAIL-WAY . . . . . By Professor Aytoun
THRAWN JANET . . . . . By R. L. Stevenson

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THE COURTING OF T'NOW-HEAD'S BELL

BY

J. M. BARRIE

THE COURTING OF T'NOWHEAD'S BELL

BY J. M. BARRIE

FOR two years it had been notorious in the square that Sam'l Dickie was thinking of courting T'nowhead's Bell, and that if Little Sanders Elshioner (which is the Thrums pronunciation of Alexander Alexander) went in for her, he might prove a formidable rival. Sam'l was a weaver in the tenements, and Sanders a coal-carter, whose trade-mark was a bell on his horse's neck that told when coal was coming. Being something of a public man, Sanders had not, perhaps, so high a social position as Sam'l, but he had succeeded his father on the coal-cart, while the weaver had already tried several trades. It had always been against Sam'l, too, that once when the kirk was vacant he had advised the selection of the third minister who preached for it on the ground that it came expensive to pay a large number of candidates. The scandal of the thing was hushed up, out of respect for his father, who was a God-fearing man, but Sam'l was known by it in Lang Tammas's circle. The coal-carter was called Little Sanders to distinguish him from his father, who was not much more than half his size. He had grown up

with the name, and its inapplicability now came home to nobody. Sam'l's mother had been more far-seeing than Sanders's. Her man had been called Sammy all his life because it was the name he got as a boy, so when their eldest son was born she spoke of him as Sam'l while still in the cradle. The neighbours imitated her, and thus the young man had a better start in life than had been granted to Sammy, his father.

It was Saturday evening—the night in the week when Auld Licht young men fell in love. Sam'l Dickie, wearing a blue glengarry bonnet with a red ball on the top, came to the door of a one-story house in the tenements, and stood there wriggling, for he was in a suit of tweed for the first time that week, and did not feel at one with them. When his feeling of being a stranger to himself wore off, he looked up and down the road, which straggles between houses and gardens, and then, picking his way over the puddles, crossed to his father's hen-house and sat down on it. He was now on his way to the square.

Eppie Fargus was sitting on an adjoining dyke knitting stockings, and Sam'l looked at her for a time.

"Is 't yersel', Eppie?" he said at last.

"It 's a' that," said Eppie.

"Hoo 's a' wi' ye?" asked Sam'l.

"We 're juist aff an' on," replied Eppie, cautiously.

There was not much more to say, but as Sam'l

sidled off the hen-house he murmured politely, "Ay, ay." In another minute he would have been fairly started, but Eppie resumed the conversation.

"Sam'l," she said, with a twinkle in her eye, "ye can tell Lisbeth Fargus I 'll likely be drappin' in on her aboot Mununday or Teisday."

Lisbeth was sister to Eppie, and wife of Tammas McQuhatty, better known as T'nowhead, which was the name of his farm. She was thus Bell's mistress.

Sam'l leaned against the hen-house as if all his desire to depart had gone.

"Hoo d' ye kin I 'll be at the T'nowhead the nicht?" he asked, grinning in anticipation.

"Ou, I 'se warrant ye 'll be after Bell," said Eppie.

"Am no sae sure o' that," said Sam'l, trying to leer. He was enjoying himself now.

"Am no sure o' that," he repeated, for Eppie seemed lost in stitches.

"Sam'l!"

"Ay."

"Ye 'll be speerin' her sune noo, I dinna doot?"

This took Sam'l, who had only been courting Bell for a year or two, a little aback.

"Hoo d' ye mean, Eppie?" he asked.

"Maybe ye 'll do 't the nicht."

"Na, there 's nae hurry," said Sam'l.

"Weel, we 're a' coontin' on 't, Sam'l."

"Gae 'wa' wi' ye."

"What for no?"

"Gae 'wa' wi' ye," said Sam'l again.

"Bell 's gei an' fond o' ye, Sam'l."

"Ay," said Sam'l.

"But am dootin' ye 're a fell billy wi' the lasses."

"Ay, oh, I d'na kin; moderate, moderate," said Sam'l, in high delight.

"I saw ye," said Eppie, speaking with a wire in her mouth, "gaein' on terr'ble wi' Mysy Haggart at the pump last Saturday."

"We was juist amoosin' oorsel's," said Sam'l.

"It 'll be nae amoosement to Mysy," said Eppie, "gin ye brak her heart."

"Losh, Eppie," said Sam'l, "I didna think o' that."

"Ye maun kin weel, Sam'l, 'at there 's mony a lass wid jump at ye."

"Ou, weel," said Sam'l, implying that a man must take these things as they come.

"For ye 're a dainty chield to look at, Sam'l."

"Do ye think so, Eppie? Ay, ay; oh, I d'na kin am onything by the ordinar."

"Ye mayna be," said Eppie, "but lasses doesna do to be ower-partikler."

Sam'l resented this, and prepared to depart again.

"Ye 'll no tell Bell that?" he asked, anxiously.

"Tell her what?"

"Aboot me an' Mysy."

"We 'll see hoo ye behave yersel', Sam'l."

"No 'at I care, Eppie; ye can tell her gin ye like. I widna think twice o' tellin' her mysel'."

"The Lord forgie ye for leein', Sam'l," said Eppie, as he disappeared down Tammy Tosh's close. Here he came upon Henders Webster.

"Ye 're late, Sam'l," said Henders.

"What for?"

"Ou, I was thinkin' ye wid be gaen the length o' T'nowhead the nicht, an' I saw Sanders Elshioner makkin' 's wy there an 'oor syne."

"Did ye?" cried Sam'l, adding craftily, "but it 's naething to me."

"Tod, lad," said Henders, "gin ye dinna buckle to, Sanders 'll be carryin' her off."

Sam'l flung back his head and passed on.

"Sam'l!" cried Henders after him.

"Ay," said Sam'l, wheeling round.

"Gie Bell a kiss frae me."

The full force of this joke struck neither all at once. Sam'l began to smile at it as he turned down the school-wynd, and it came upon Henders while he was in his garden feeding his ferret. Then he slapped his legs gleefully, and explained the conceit to Will'um Byars, who went into the house and thought it over.

There were twelve or twenty little groups of men in the square, which was lit by a flare of oil suspended over a cadger's cart. Now and again a staid young woman passed through the square with a basket on her arm, and if she had lingered long enough to give them time, some of the idlers would have addressed her. As it was, they gazed after her, and then grinned to each other.

"Ay, Sam'l," said two or three young men, as Sam'l joined them beneath the town clock.

"Ay, Davit," replied Sam'l.

This group was composed of some of the sharpest wits in Thrums, and it was not to be expected that they would let this opportunity pass. Perhaps when Sam'l joined them he knew what was in store for him.

"Was ye lookin' for T'nowhead's Bell, Sam'l?" asked one.

"Or mebbe ye was wantin' the minister?" suggested another, the same who had walked out twice with Chirsty Duff and not married her after all.

Sam'l could not think of a good reply at the moment, so he laughed good-naturedly.

"Ondootedly she 's a snod bit crittur," said Davit, archly.

"An' michty clever wi' her fingers," added Jamie Deuchars.

"Man, I 've thocht o' makkin' up to Bell mysel'," said Pete Ogle. "Wid there be ony chance, think ye, Sam'l?"

"I 'm thinkin' she widna hae ye for her first, Pete," replied Sam'l, in one of those happy flashes that come to some men, "but there 's nae sayin' but what she micht tak' ye to finish up wi'."

The unexpectedness of this sally startled every one. Though Sam'l did not set up for a wit, however, like Davit, it was notorious that he could say a cutting thing once in a way.

"Did ye ever see Bell reddin' up?" asked Pete,

recovering from his overthrow. He was a man who bore no malice.

"It 's a sicht," said Sam'l, solemnly.

"Hoo will that be?" asked Jamie Deuchars.

"It 's weel worth yer while," said Pete, "to ging atower to the T'nowhead an' see. Ye 'll mind the closed-in beds i' the kitchen? Ay, weel, they 're a fell spoiled crew, T'nowhead's litlins, an' no that aisy to manage. Th' ither lasses Lisbeth's haen had a michty trouble wi' them. When they war i' the middle o' their reddin' up the bairns wid come tum'lin' aboot the floor, but, sal, I assure ye, Bell didna fash lang wi' them. Did she, Sam'l?"

"She did not," said Sam'l, dropping into a fine mode of speech to add emphasis to his remark.

"I 'll tell ye what she did," said Pete to the others. "She juist lifted up the litlins, twa at a time, an' flung them into the coffin-beds. Syne she snibbit the doors on them, an' keepit them there till the floor was dry."

"Ay, man, did she so?" said Davit, admiringly.

"I 've seen her do 't mysel'," said Sam'l.

"There 's no a lassie mak's better bannocks this side o' Fetter Lums," continued Pete.

"Her mither tocht her that," said Sam'l; "she was a gran' han' at the bakin', Kitty Ogilvy."

"I 've heard say," remarked Jamie, putting it this way so as not to tie himself down to anything, "'at Bell's scones is equal to Mag Lunan's."

"So they are," said Sam'l, almost fiercely.

"I kin she 's a neat han' at singein' a hen," said Pete.

"An' wi' 't a'," said Davit, "she 's a snod, canty bit stocky in her Sabbath claes."

"If onything, thick in the waist," suggested Jamie.

"I dinna see that," said Sam'l.

"I d'na care for her hair, either," continued Jamie, who was very nice in his tastes; "something mair yallowchy wid be an improvement."

"A'body kins," growled Sam'l, "'at black hair 's the bonniest."

The others chuckled.

"Puir Sam'l!" Pete said.

Sam'l, not being certain whether this should be received with a smile or a frown, opened his mouth wide as a kind of compromise. This was position one with him for thinking things over.

Few Auld Lichts, as I have said, went the length of choosing a helpmate for themselves. One day a young man's friends would see him mending the washing-tub of a maiden's mother. They kept the joke until Saturday night, and then he learned from them what he had been after. It dazed him for a time, but in a year or so he grew accustomed to the idea, and they were then married. With a little help he fell in love just like other people.

Sam'l was going the way of the others, but he found it difficult to come to the point. He only went courting once a week, and he could never take up the running at the place where he left off

the Saturday before. Thus he had not, so far, made great headway. His method of making up to Bell had been to drop in at T'nowhead on Saturday nights and talk with the farmer about the rinderpest.

The farm kitchen was Bell's testimonial. Its chairs, tables, and stools were scoured by her to the whiteness of Rob Angus's sawmill boards, and the muslin blind on the window was starched like a child's pinafore. Bell was brave, too, as well as energetic. Once Thrums had been overrun with thieves. It is now thought that there may have been only one, but he had the wicked cleverness of a gang. Such was his repute that there were weavers who spoke of locking their doors when they went from home. He was not very skilful, however, being generally caught, and when they said they knew he was a robber, he gave them their things back and went away. If they had given him time there is no doubt that he would have gone off with his plunder. One night he went to T'nowhead, and Bell, who slept in the kitchen, was awakened by the noise. She knew who it would be, so she rose and dressed herself, and went to look for him with a candle. The thief had not known what to do when he got in, and as it was very lonely he was glad to see Bell. She told him he ought to be ashamed of himself, and would not let him out by the door until he had taken off his boots so as not to soil the carpet.

On this Saturday evening Sam'l stood his ground

in the square, until by-and-by he found himself alone. There were other groups there still, but his circle had melted away. They went separately, and no one said good-night. Each took himself off slowly, backing out of the group until he was fairly started.

Sam'l looked about him, and then, seeing that the others had gone, walked round the town-house into the darkness of the brae that leads down and then up to the farm of T'nowhead.

To get into the good graces of Lisbeth Fargus you had to know her ways and humour them. Sam'l, who was a student of women, knew this, and so, instead of pushing the door open and walking in, he went through the rather ridiculous ceremony of knocking. Sanders Elshioner was also aware of this weakness of Lisbeth's, but though he often made up his mind to knock, the absurdity of the thing prevented his doing so when he reached the door. T'nowhead himself had never got used to his wife's refined notions, and when any one knocked he always started to his feet, thinking there must be something wrong.

Lisbeth came to the door, her expansive figure blocking the way in.

"Sam'l," she said.

"Lisbeth," said Sam'l.

He shook hands with the farmer's wife, knowing that she liked it, but only said, "Ay, Bell," to his sweetheart, "Ay, T'nowhead," to McQuhatty, and "It 's yersel', Sanders," to his rival.

They were all sitting round the fire; T'nowhead, with his feet on the ribs, wondering why he felt so warm; and Bell darned a stocking, while Lisbeth kept an eye on a goblet full of potatoes.

"Sit into the fire, Sam'l," said the farmer, not, however, making way for him.

"Na, na," said Sam'l; "I 'm to bide nae time." Then he sat into the fire. His face was turned away from Bell, and when she spoke he answered her without looking round. Sam'l felt a little anxious. Sanders Elshioner, who had one leg shorter than the other, but looked well when sitting, seemed suspiciously at home. He asked Bell questions out of his own head, which was beyond Sam'l, and once he said something to her in such a low voice that the others could not catch it. T'nowhead asked curiously what it was, and Sanders explained that he had only said, "Ay, Bell, the morn 's the Sabbath." There was nothing startling in this, but Sam'l did not like it. He began to wonder if he were too late, and had he seen his opportunity would have told Bell of a nasty rumour that Sanders intended to go over to the Free Church if they would make him kirk officer.

Sam'l had the good-will of T'nowhead's wife, who liked a polite man. Sanders did his best, but from want of practice he constantly made mistakes. To-night, for instance, he wore his hat in the house because he did not like to put up his hand and take it off. T'nowhead had not taken his off, either, but that was because he meant to

go out by-and-by and lock the byre door. It was impossible to say which of her lovers Bell preferred. The proper course with an Auld Licht lassie was to prefer the man who proposed to her.

"Ye 'll bide a wee, an' hae something to eat?" Lisbeth asked Sam'l, with her eyes on the goblet.

"No, I thank ye," said Sam'l, with true gentility.

"Ye 'll better."

"I dinna think it."

"Hoots aye, what 's to hender ye?"

"Weel, since ye 're sae pressin', I 'll bide."

No one asked Sanders to stay. Bell could not, for she was but the servant, and T'nowhead knew that the kick his wife had given him meant that he was not to do so, either. Sanders whistled to show that he was not uncomfortable.

"Ay, then, I 'll be stappin' ower the brae," he said at last.

He did not go, however. There was sufficient pride in him to get him off his chair, but only slowly, for he had to get accustomed to the notion of going. At intervals of two or three minutes he remarked that he must now be going. In the same circumstances Sam'l would have acted similarly. For a Thrums man, it is one of the hardest things in life to get away from anywhere.

At last Lisbeth saw that something must be done. The potatoes were burning, and T'nowhead had an invitation on his tongue.

"Yes, I 'll hae to be movin'," said Sanders, hopelessly, for the fifth time.

"Guid-nicht to ye, then, Sanders," said Lisbeth. "Gie the door a fling-to ahent ye."

Sanders, with a mighty effort, pulled himself together. He looked boldly at Bell, and then took off his hat carefully. Sam'l saw with misgivings that there was something in it which was not a handkerchief. It was a paper bag glittering with gold braid, and contained such an assortment of sweets as lads bought for their lasses on the Muckle Friday.

"Hae, Bell," said Sanders, handing the bag to Bell in an offhand way as if it were but a trifle. Nevertheless he was a little excited, for he went off without saying good-night.

No one spoke. Bell's face was crimson. T'nowhead fidgeted on his chair, and Lisbeth looked at Sam'l. The weaver was strangely calm and collected, though he would have liked to know whether this was a proposal.

"Sit in by to the table, Sam'l," said Lisbeth, trying to look as if things were as they had been before.

She put a saucerful of butter, salt, and pepper near the fire to melt, for melted butter is the shoeing-horn that helps over a meal of potatoes. Sam'l, however, saw what the hour required, and, jumping up, he seized his bonnet.

"Hing the tatties higher up the joist, Lisbeth," he said, with dignity; "I 'se be back in ten meenits."

He hurried out of the house, leaving the others looking at each other.

"What do ye think?" asked Lisbeth.

"I d'na kin," faltered Bell.

"Thae tatties is lang o' comin' to the boil," said T'nowhead.

In some circles a lover who behaved like Sam'l would have been suspected of intent upon his rival's life, but neither Bell nor Lisbeth did the weaver that injustice. In a case of this kind it does not much matter what T'nowhead thought.

The ten minutes had barely passed when Sam'l was back in the farm kitchen. He was too flurried to knock this time, and, indeed, Lisbeth did not expect it of him.

"Bell, hae!" he cried, handing his sweetheart a tinsel bag twice the size of Sanders's gift.

"Losh preserve 's!" exclaimed Lisbeth; "I 'se warrant there 's a shillin's worth."

"There 's a' that, Lisbeth—an' mair," said Sam'l, firmly.

"I thank ye, Sam'l," said Bell, feeling an unwonted elation as she gazed at the two paper bags in her lap.

"Ye 're ower-extravegint, Sam'l," Lisbeth said.

"Not at all," said Sam'l; "not at all. But I widna advise ye to eat thae ither anes, Bell—they 're second quality."

Bell drew back a step from Sam'l.

"How do ye kin?" asked the farmer, shortly, for he liked Sanders.

"I speered i' the shop," said Sam'l.

The goblet was placed on a broken plate on the

table, with the saucer beside it, and Sam'l, like the others, helped himself. What he did was to take potatoes from the pot with his fingers, peel off their coats, and then dip them into the butter. Lisbeth would have liked to provide knives and forks, but she knew that beyond a certain point T'nowhead was master in his own house. As for Sam'l, he felt victory in his hands, and began to think that he had gone too far.

In the meantime Sanders, little witting that Sam'l had trumped his trick, was sauntering along the kirk-wynd with his hat on the side of his head. Fortunately he did not meet the minister.

The courting of T'nowhead's Bell reached its crisis one Sabbath about a month after the events above recorded. The minister was in great force that day, but it is no part of mine to tell how he bore himself. I was there, and am not likely to forget the scene. It was a fateful Sabbath for T'nowhead's Bell and her swains, and destined to be remembered for the painful scandal which they perpetrated in their passion.

Bell was not in the kirk. There being an infant of six months in the house it was a question of either Lisbeth or the lassie's staying at home with him, and though Lisbeth was unselfish in a general way, she could not resist the delight of going to church. She had nine children besides the baby, and, being but a woman, it was the pride of her life to march them into the T'nowhead pew, so well watched that they dared not misbehave, and

so tightly packed that they could not fall. The congregation looked at that pew, the mothers enviously, when they sang the lines:

> "Jerusalem like a city is
> Compactly built together."

The first half of the service had been gone through on this particular Sunday without anything remarkable happening. It was at the end of the psalm which preceded the sermon that Sanders Elshioner, who sat near the door, lowered his head until it was no higher than the pews, and in that attitude, looking almost like a four-footed animal, slipped out of the church. In their eagerness to be at the sermon many of the congregation did not notice him, and those who did put the matter by in their minds for future investigation. Sam'l, however, could not take it so coolly. From his seat in the gallery he saw Sanders disappear, and his mind misgave him. With the true lover's instinct he understood it all. Sanders had been struck by the fine turnout in the T'nowhead pew. Bell was alone at the farm. What an opportunity to work one's way up to a proposal! T'nowhead was so overrun with children that such a chance seldom occurred, except on a Sabbath. Sanders, doubtless, was off to propose, and he, Sam'l, was left behind.

The suspense was terrible. Sam'l and Sanders had both known all along that Bell would take the first of the two who asked her. Even those who

thought her proud admitted that she was modest. Bitterly the weaver repented having waited so long. Now it was too late. In ten minutes Sanders would be at T'nowhead; in an hour all would be over. Sam'l rose to his feet in a daze. His mother pulled him down by the coat-tail, and his father shook him, thinking he was walking in his sleep. He tottered past them, however, hurried up the aisle, which was so narrow that Dan'l Ross could only reach his seat by walking sideways, and was gone before the minister could do more than stop in the middle of a whirl and gape in horror after him.

A number of the congregation felt that day the advantage of sitting in the laft. What was a mystery to those downstairs was revealed to them. From the gallery windows they had a fine open view to the south; and as Sam'l took the common, which was a short cut though a steep ascent, to T'nowhead, he was never out of their line of vision. Sanders was not to be seen, but they guessed rightly the reason why. Thinking he had ample time, he had gone round by the main road to save his boots—perhaps a little scared by what was coming. Sam'l's design was to forestall him by taking the shorter path over the burn and up the commonty.

It was a race for a wife, and several onlookers in the gallery braved the minister's displeasure to see who won. Those who favoured Sam'l's suit exultingly saw him leap the stream, while the

friends of Sanders fixed their eyes on the top of the common where it ran into the road. Sanders must come into sight there, and the one who reached this point first would get Bell.

As Auld Lichts do not walk abroad on the Sabbath, Sanders would probably not be delayed. The chances were in his favour. Had it been any other day in the week Sam'l might have run. So some of the congregation in the gallery were thinking, when suddenly they saw him bend low and then take to his heels. He had caught sight of Sanders's head bobbing over the hedge that separated the road from the common, and feared that Sanders might see him. The congregation who could crane their necks sufficiently saw a black object, which they guessed to be the carter's hat, crawling along the hedge-top. For a moment it was motionless, and then it shot ahead. The rivals had seen each other. It was now a hot race. Sam'l, dissembling no longer, clattered up the common, becoming smaller and smaller to the onlookers as he neared the top. More than one person in the gallery almost rose to their feet in their excitement. Sam'l had it. No, Sanders was in front. Then the two figures disappeared from view. They seemed to run into each other at the top of the brae, and no one could say who was first. The congregation looked at one another. Some of them perspired. But the minister held on his course.

Sam'l had just been in time to cut Sanders out.

It was the weaver's saving that Sanders saw this when his rival turned the corner; for Sam'l was sadly blown. Sanders took in the situation and gave in at once. The last hundred yards of the distance he covered at his leisure, and when he arrived at his destination he did not go in. It was a fine afternoon for the time of year, and he went round to have a look at the pig, about which T'nowhead was a little sinfully puffed up.

"Ay," said Sanders, digging his fingers critically into the grunting animal, "quite so."

"Grumph," said the pig, getting reluctantly to his feet.

"Ou, ay, yes," said Sanders, thoughtfully.

Then he sat down on the edge of the sty, and looked long and silently at an empty bucket. But whether his thoughts were of T'nowhead's Bell, whom he had lost for ever, or of the food the farmer fed his pig on, is not known.

"Lord preserve 's! are ye no at the kirk?" cried Bell, nearly dropping the baby as Sam'l broke into the room.

"Bell!" cried Sam'l.

Then T'nowhead's Bell knew that her hour had come.

"Sam'l," she faltered.

"Will ye hae 's, Bell?" demanded Sam'l, glaring at her sheepishly.

"Ay," answered Bell.

Sam'l fell into a chair.

"Bring 's a drink o' water, Bell," he said. But

Bell thought the occasion required milk, and there was none in the kitchen. She went out to the byre, still with the baby in her arms, and saw Sanders Elshioner sitting gloomily on the pigsty.

"Weel, Bell," said Sanders.

"I thocht ye 'd been at the kirk, Sanders," said Bell.

Then there was a silence between them.

"Has Sam'l speered ye, Bell?" asked Sanders, stolidly.

"Ay," said Bell again, and this time there was a tear in her eye. Sanders was little better than an "orra man," and Sam'l was a weaver, and yet— But it was too late now. Sanders gave the pig a vicious poke with a stick, and when it had ceased to grunt, Bell was back in the kitchen. She had forgotten about the milk, however, and Sam'l only got water after all.

In after-days, when the story of Bell's wooing was told, there were some who held that the circumstances would have almost justified the lassie in giving Sam'l the go-by. But these perhaps forgot that her other lover was in the same predicament as the accepted one—that of the two, indeed, he was the more to blame, for he set off to T'nowhead on the Sabbath of his own accord, while Sam'l only ran after him. And then there is no one to say for certain whether Bell heard of her suitors' delinquencies until Lisbeth's return from the kirk. Sam'l could never remember whether he told her, and Bell was not sure whether, if he did, she took it in. Sanders was greatly in de-

mand for weeks after to tell what he knew of the affair, but though he was twice asked to tea to the manse among the trees, and subjected thereafter to ministerial cross-examinations, this is all he told. He remained at the pigsty until Sam'l left the farm, when he joined him at the top of the brae, and they went home together.

"It 's yersel', Sanders," said Sam'l.

"It is so, Sam'l," said Sanders.

"Very cauld," said Sam'l.

"Blawy," assented Sanders.

After a pause—

"Sam'l," said Sanders.

"Ay."

"I 'm hearin' ye 're to be mairit."

"Ay."

"Weel, Sam'l, she 's a snod bit lassie."

"Thank ye," said Sam'l.

"I had ance a kin' o' notion o' Bell mysel'," continued Sanders.

"Ye had?"

"Yes, Sam'l; but I thocht better o' 't."

"Hoo d' ye mean?" asked Sam'l, a little anxiously.

"Weel, Sam'l, mairitch is a terrible responsibeelity."

"It is so," said Sam'l, wincing.

"An' no the thing to tak' up withoot conseederation."

"But it 's a blessed and honourable state, Sanders; ye 've heard the minister on 't."

"They say," continued the relentless Sanders,

"'at the minister doesna get on sair wi' the wife himsel'."

"So they do," cried Sam'l, with a sinking at the heart.

"I 've been telt," Sanders went on, "'at gin ye can get the upper han' o' the wife for a while at first, there 's the mair chance o' a harmonious exeestence."

"Bell 's no the lassie," said Sam'l, appealingly, "to thwart her man."

Sanders smiled.

"D' ye think she is, Sanders?"

"Weel, Sam'l, I d'na want to fluster ye, but she 's been ower-lang wi' Lisbeth Fargus no to hae learned her ways. An' a'body kins what a life T'nowhead has wi' her."

"Guid sake, Sanders, hoo did ye no speak o' this afore?"

"I thocht ye kent o' 't, Sam'l."

They had now reached the square, and the U. P. kirk was coming out. The Auld Licht kirk would be half an hour yet.

"But, Sanders," said Sam'l, brightening up, "ye was on yer wy to speer her yersel'."

"I was, Sam'l," said Sanders, "and I canna but be thankfu' ye was ower-quick for 's."

"Gin 't hadna been you," said Sam'l, "I wid never hae thocht o' 't."

"I 'm sayin' naething agin' Bell," pursued the other, "but, man Sam'l, a body should be mair deleeberate in a thing o' the kind."

"It was michty hurried," said Sam'l, wofully.

"It 's a serious thing to speer a lassie," said Sanders.

"It 's an awfu' thing," said Sam'l.

"But we 'll hope for the best," added Sanders, in a hopeless voice.

They were close to the tenements now, and Sam'l looked as if he were on his way to be hanged.

"Sam'l!"

"Ay, Sanders."

"Did ye—did ye kiss her, Sam'l?"

"Na."

"Hoo?"

"There 's was varra little time, Sanders."

"Half an 'oor," said Sanders.

"Was there? Man Sanders, to tell ye the truth, I never thocht o' 't."

Then the soul of Sanders Elshioner was filled with contempt for Sam'l Dickie.

The scandal blew over. At first it was expected that the minister would interfere to prevent the union, but beyond intimating from the pulpit that the souls of Sabbath-breakers were beyond praying for, and then praying for Sam'l and Sanders at great length, with a word thrown in for Bell, he let things take their course. Some said it was because he was always frightened lest his young men should intermarry with other denominations, but Sanders explained it differently to Sam'l.

"I hav'na a word to say agin' the minister," he

said; "they 're gran' prayers; but, Sam'l, he 's a mairit man himsel'."

"He 's a' the better for that, Sanders, isna he?"

"Do ye no see," asked Sanders, compassionately, "'at he 's tryin' to mak' the best o' 't?"

"O Sanders, man!" said Sam'l.

"Cheer up, Sam'l," said Sanders; "it 'll sune be ower."

Their having been rival suitors had not interfered with their friendship. On the contrary, while they had hitherto been mere acquaintances, they became inseparables as the wedding-day drew near. It was noticed that they had much to say to each other, and that when they could not get a room to themselves they wandered about together in the churchyard. When Sam'l had anything to tell Bell he sent Sanders to tell it, and Sanders did as he was bid. There was nothing that he would not have done for Sam'l.

The more obliging Sanders was, however, the sadder Sam'l grew. He never laughed now on Saturdays, and sometimes his loom was silent half the day. Sam'l felt that Sanders's was the kindness of a friend for a dying man.

It was to be a penny wedding, and Lisbeth Fargus said it was delicacy that made Sam'l superintend the fitting up of the barn by deputy. Once he came to see it in person, but he looked so ill that Sanders had to see him home. This was on the Thursday afternoon, and the wedding was fixed for Friday.

"Sanders, Sanders," said Sam'l, in a voice strangely unlike his own, "it 'll a' be ower by this time the morn."

"It will," said Sanders.

"If I had only kent her langer," continued Sam'l.

"It wid hae been safer," said Sanders.

"Did ye see the yallow floor in Bell's bonnet?" asked the accepted swain.

"Ay," said Sanders, reluctantly.

"I 'm dootin'—I 'm sair dootin' she 's but a flichty, light-hearted crittur after a'."

"I had aye my suspeecions o' 't," said Sanders.

"Ye hae kent her langer than me," said Sam'l.

"Yes," said Sanders, "but there 's nae gettin' at the heart o' women. Man Sam'l, they 're desperate cunnin'."

"I 'm dootin' 't; I 'm sair dootin' 't."

"It 'll be a warnin' to ye, Sam'l, no to be in sic a hurry i' the futur'," said Sanders.

Sam'l groaned.

"Ye 'll be gaein' up to the manse to arrange wi' the minister the morn's mornin'," continued Sanders, in a subdued voice.

Sam'l looked wistfully at his friend.

"I canna do 't, Sanders," he said; "I canna do 't."

"Ye maun," said Sanders.

"It 's aisy to speak," retorted Sam'l, bitterly.

"We have a' oor troubles, Sam'l," said Sanders, soothingly, "an' every man maun bear his ain

burdens. Johnny Davie's wife 's dead, an' he 's no repinin'."

"Ay," said Sam'l, "but a death 's no a mairitch. We hae haen deaths in our family too."

"It may a' be for the best," added Sanders, "an' there wid be a michty talk i' the hale country-side gin ye didna ging to the minister like a man."

"I maun hae langer to think o' 't," said Sam'l.

"Bell's mairitch is the morn," said Sanders, decisively.

Sam'l glanced up with a wild look in his eyes.

"Sanders!" he cried.

"Sam'l!"

"Ye hae been a guid friend to me, Sanders, in this sair affliction."

"Nothing ava," said Sanders; "doun't mention 'd."

"But, Sanders, ye canna deny but what your rinnin' oot o' the kirk that awfu' day was at the bottom o' 'd a'."

"It was so," said Sanders, bravely.

"An' ye used to be fond o' Bell, Sanders."

"I dinna deny 't."

"Sanders, laddie," said Sam'l, bending forward and speaking in a wheedling voice, "I aye thocht it was you she likit."

"I had some sic idea mysel'," said Sanders.

"Sanders, I canna think to pairt twa fowk sae weel suited to ane anither as you an' Bell."

"Canna ye, Sam'l?"

"She wid mak' ye a guid wife, Sanders. I hae

studied her weel, and she 's a thrifty, douce, clever lassie. Sanders, there 's no the like o' her. Mony a time, Sanders, I hae said to mysel', 'There 's a lass ony man micht be prood to tak'.' A'body says the same, Sanders. There 's nae risk ava, man—nane to speak o'. Tak' her, laddie; tak' her, Sanders; it 's a grand chance, Sanders. She 's yours for the speerin'. I 'll gie her up, Sanders."

"Will ye, though?" said Sanders.

"What d' ye think?" asked Sam'l.

"If ye wid rayther," said Sanders, politely.

"There 's my han' on 't," said Sam'l. "Bless ye, Sanders; ye 've been a true frien' to me."

Then they shook hands for the first time in their lives, and soon afterward Sanders struck up the brae to T'nowhead.

Next morning Sanders Elshioner, who had been very busy the night before, put on his Sabbath clothes and strolled up to the manse.

"But—but where is Sam'l?" asked the minister; "I must see himself."

"It 's a new arrangement," said Sanders.

"What do you mean, Sanders?"

"Bell 's to marry me," explained Sanders.

"But—but what does Sam'l say?"

"He 's willin'," said Sanders.

"And Bell?"

"She 's willin' too. She prefers 't."

"It is unusual," said the minister.

"It 's a' richt," said Sanders.

"Well, you know best," said the minister.

"You see the hoose was taen, at ony rate," continued Sanders, "an' I 'll juist ging in til 't instead o' Sam'l."

"Quite so."

"An' I cudna think to disappoint the lassie."

"Your sentiments do you credit, Sanders," said the minister; "but I hope you do not enter upon the blessed state of matrimony without full consideration of its responsibilities. It is a serious business, marriage."

"It 's a' that," said Sanders, "but I 'm willin' to stan' the risk."

So, as soon as it could be done, Sanders Elshioner took to wife T'nowhead's Bell, and I remember seeing Sam'l Dickie trying to dance at the penny wedding.

Years afterward it was said in Thrums that Sam'l had treated Bell badly, but he was never sure about it himself.

"It was a near thing—a michty near thing," he admitted in the square.

"They say," some other weaver would remark, "'at it was you Bell liked best."

"I d'na kin," Sam'l would reply; "but there 's nae doot the lassie was fell fond o' me; ou, a mere passin' fancy, 's ye micht say."

"THE HEATHER LINTIE"

BY

S. R. CROCKETT

"THE HEATHER LINTIE"[1]

BY S. R. CROCKETT

JANET BALCHRYSTIE lived in a little cottage at the back of the Long Wood of Barbrax. She had been a hard-working woman all her days, for her mother died when she was but young, and she had lived on, keeping her father's house by the side of the single-track railway-line. Gavin Balchrystie was a foreman plate-layer on the P. P. R., and, with two men under him, had charge of a section of three miles. He lived just where that distinguished but impecunious line plunges into a moss-covered granite wilderness of moor and bog, where there is not more than a shepherd's hut to the half-dozen miles, and where the passage of a train is the occasion of commotion among scattered groups of black-faced sheep. Gavin Balchrystie's three miles of P. P. R. metals gave him little work, but a good deal of healthy exercise. The black-faced sheep breaking down the fences and straying on the line side, and the torrents coming down the granite gullies, foaming white after a water-spout, and tearing into his

1 From "The Stickit Minister," copyrighted, 1894, by Macmillan & Co.

embankments, undermining his chairs and plates, were the only troubles of his life. There was, however, a little public-house at The Huts, which in the old days of construction had had the license, and which had lingered alone, license and all, when its immediate purpose in life had been fulfilled, because there was nobody but the whaups and the railway officials on the passing trains to object to its continuance. Now it is cold and blowy on the west-land moors, and neither whaups nor dark-blue uniforms object to a little refreshment up there. The mischief was that Gavin Balchrystie did not, like the guards and engine-drivers, go on with the passing train. He was always on the spot, and the path through Barbrax Wood to the Railway Inn was as well trodden as that which led over the big moss, where the whaups built, to the great white viaduct of Loch Merrick, where his three miles of parallel gleaming responsibility began.

When his wife was but newly dead, and his Janet just a smart elf-locked lassie running to and from the school, Gavin got too much in the way of "slippin' doon by." When Janet grew to be woman muckle, Gavin kept the habit, and Janet hardly knew that it was not the use and wont of all fathers to sidle down to a contiguous Railway Arms, and return some hours later with uncertain step, and face pricked out with bright pin-points of red—the sure mark of the confirmed drinker of whisky neat.

They were long days in the cottage at the back of Barbrax Long Wood. The little "but an' ben" was whitewashed till it dazzled the eyes as you came over the brae to it and found it set against the solemn depths of dark-green firwood. From early morn, when she saw her father off, till the dusk of the day, when he would return for his supper, Janet Balchrystie saw no human being. She heard the muffled roar of the trains through the deep cutting at the back of the wood, but she herself was entirely out of sight of the carriagefuls of travellers whisking past within half a mile of her solitude and meditation.

Janet was what is called a "through-gaun lass," and her work for the day was often over by eight o'clock in the morning. Janet grew to womanhood without a sweetheart. She was plain, and she looked plainer than she was in the dresses which she made for herself by the light of nature and what she could remember of the current fashions at Merrick Kirk, to which she went every alternate Sunday. Her father and she took day about. Wet or shine, she tramped to Merrick Kirk, even when the rain blattered and the wind raved and bleated alternately among the pines of the Long Wood of Barbrax. Her father had a simpler way of spending his day out. He went down to the Railway Inn and drank "ginger-beer" all day with the landlord. Ginger-beer is an unsteadying beverage when taken the day by the length. Also the man who drinks it steadily and

quietly never enters on any inheritance of length of days.

So it came to pass that one night Gavin Balchrystie did not come home at all—at least, not till he was brought lying comfortably on the door of a disused third-class carriage, which was now seeing out its career anchored under the bank at Loch Merrick, where Gavin had used it as a shelter. The driver of the "six-fifty up" train had seen him walking soberly along toward The Huts (and the Railway Inn), letting his long surfaceman's hammer fall against the rail-keys occasionally as he walked. He saw him bend once, as though his keen ear detected a false ring in a loose length between two plates. This was the last that was seen of him till the driver of the "nine-thirty-seven down" express—the "boat-train," as the employees of the P. P. R. call it, with a touch of respect in their voices—passed Gavin fallen forward on his face just when he was flying down grade under a full head of steam. It was duskily clear, with a great lake of crimson light dying into purple over the hills of midsummer heather. The driver was John Platt, the Englishman from Crewe, who had been brought from the great London and Northwestern Railway, locally known as "The Ell-nen-doubleyou." In these remote railway circles the talk is as exclusively of matters of the four-foot way as in Crewe or Derby. There is an inspector of traffic, whose portly presence now graces Carlisle Station, who left the P. P. R. in

these sad days of amalgamation, because he could not endure to see so many "Sou'west" waggons passing over the sacred metals of the P. P. R. permanent way. From his youth he had been trained in a creed of two articles: "To swear by the P. P. R. through thick and thin, and hate the apple green of the 'Sou'west.'" It was as much as he could do to put up with the sight of the abominations; to have to hunt for their trucks when they got astray was more than mortal could stand, so he fled the land.

So when they stopped the express for Gavin Balchrystie, every man on the line felt that it was an honour to the dead. John Platt sent a "gurring" thrill through the train as he put his brakes hard down and whistled for the guard. He, thinking that the Merrick Viaduct was down at least, twirled his brake to such purpose that the rear car progressed along the metals by a series of convulsive bounds. Then they softly ran back, and there lay Gavin fallen forward on his knees, as though he had been trying to rise, or had knelt down to pray. Let him have "the benefit of the doubt" in this world. In the next, if all tales be true, there is no such thing.

So Janet Balchrystie dwelt alone in the white "but an' ben" at the back of the Long Wood of Barbrax. The factor gave her notice, but the laird, who was not accounted by his neighbours to be very wise, because he did needlessly kind things, told the factor to let the lassie bide, and delivered

to herself with his own handwriting to the effect that Janet Balchrystie, in consideration of her lonely condition, was to be allowed the house for her lifetime, a cow's grass, and thirty pound sterling in the year as a charge on the estate. He drove down the cow himself, and having stalled it in the byre, he informed her of the fact over the yard dyke by word of mouth, for he never could be induced to enter her door. He was accounted to be "gey an' queer," save by those who had tried making a bargain with him. But his farmers liked him, knowing him to be an easy man with those who had been really unfortunate, for he knew to what the year's crops of each had amounted, to a single chalder and head of nowt.

Deep in her heart Janet Balchrystie cherished a great ambition. When the earliest blackbird awoke and began to sing, while it was yet gray twilight, Janet would be up and at her work. She had an ambition to be a great poet. No less than this would serve her. But not even her father had known, and no other had any chance of knowing. In the black leather chest, which had been her mother's, upstairs, there was a slowly growing pile of manuscript, and the editor of the local paper received every other week a poem, longer or shorter, for his Poet's Corner, in an envelope with the New Dalry postmark. He was an obliging editor, and generally gave the closely written manuscript to the senior office boy, who had passed the sixth standard, to cut down, tinker the

rhymes, and lop any superfluity of feet. The senior office boy "just spread himself," as he said, and delighted to do the job in style. But there was a woman fading into a gray old-maidishness which had hardly ever been girlhood, who did not at all approve of these corrections. She endured them because over the signature of "Heather Bell" it was a joy to see in the rich, close luxury of type her own poetry, even though it might be a trifle tattered and tossed about by hands ruthless and alien—those, in fact, of the senior office boy.

Janet walked every other week to the post-office at New Dalry to post her letters to the editor, but neither that great man nor yet the senior office boy had any conception that the verses of their "esteemed correspondent" were written by a woman too early old who dwelt alone at the back of Barbrax Long Wood.

One day Janet took a sudden but long-meditated journey. She went down by rail from the little station of The Huts to the large town of Drum, thirty miles to the east. Here, with the most perfect courage and dignity of bearing, she interviewed a printer and arranged for the publication of her poems in their own original form, no longer staled and clapper-clawed by the pencil of the senior office boy. When the proof-sheets came to Janet, she had no way of indicating the corrections but by again writing the whole poem out in a neat print hand on the edge of the proof, and underscoring the words which were to be altered.

This, when you think of it, is a very good way, when the happiest part of your life is to be spent in such concrete pleasures of hope, as Janet's were over the crackly sheets of the printer of Drum. Finally the book was produced, a small, rather thickish octavo, on sufficiently wretched gray paper which had suffered from want of thorough washing in the original paper-mill. It was bound in a peculiarly deadly blue, of a rectified Reckitt tint, which gave you dazzles in the eye at any distance under ten paces. Janet had selected this as the most appropriate of colours. She had also many years ago decided upon the title, so that Reckitt had printed upon it, back and side, "The Heather Lintie," while inside there was the acknowledgment of authorship, which Janet felt to be a solemn duty to the world: "Poems by Janet Balchrystie, Barbrax Cottage, by New Dalry." First she had thought of withholding her name and style; but, on the whole, after the most prolonged consideration, she felt that she was not justified in bringing about such a controversy as divided Scotland concerning that "Great Unknown" who wrote the Waverley Novels.

Almost every second or third day Janet trod that long lochside road to New Dalry for her proof-sheets, and returned them on the morrow corrected in her own way. Sometimes she got a lift from some farmer or carter, for she had worn herself with anxiety to the shadow of what she had once been, and her dry bleached hair became gray

and grayer with the fervour of her devotion to letters.

By April the book was published, and at the end of this month, laid aside by sickness of the vague kind called locally "a decline," she took to her bed, rising only to lay a few sticks upon the fire from her store gathered in the autumn, or to brew herself a cup of tea. She waited for the tokens of her book's conquests in the great world of thought and men. She had waited so long for her recognition, and now it was coming. She felt that it would not be long before she was recognised as one of the singers of the world. Indeed, had she but known it, her recognition was already on its way.

In a great city of the north a clever young reporter was cutting open the leaves of "The Heather Lintie" with a hand almost feverishly eager.

"This is a perfect treasure. This is a find indeed. Here is my chance ready to my hand."

His paper was making a specialty of "exposures." If there was anything weak and erring, anything particularly helpless and foolish which could make no stand for itself, the "Night Hawk" was on the pounce. Hitherto the junior reporter had never had a "two-column chance." He had read—it was not much that he *had* read—Macaulay's too famous article on "Satan" Montgomery, and, not knowing that Macaulay lived to regret the spirit of that assault, he felt that if he could bring down the "Night Hawk" on "The

Heather Lintie," his fortune was made. So he sat down and he wrote, not knowing and not regarding a lonely woman's heart, to whom his word would be as the word of a God, in the lonely cottage lying in the lee of the Long Wood of Barbrax.

The junior reporter turned out a triumph of the new journalism. "This is a book which may be a genuine source of pride to every native of the ancient province of Galloway," he wrote. "Galloway has been celebrated for black cattle and for wool, as also for a certain bucolic belatedness of temperament, but Galloway has never hitherto produced a poetess. One has arisen in the person of Miss Janet Bal—something or other. We have not an interpreter at hand, and so cannot wrestle with the intricacies of the authoress's name, which appears to be some Galwegian form of Erse or Choctaw. Miss Bal—and so forth—has a true fount of pathos and humour. In what touching language she chronicles the death of two young lambs which fell into one of the puddles they call rivers down there, and were either drowned or choked with the dirt:

> "'They were two bonny, bonny lambs,
> That played upon the daisied lea,
> And loudly mourned their woolly dams
> Above the drumly flowing Dee.'

How touchingly simple!" continued the junior reporter, buckling up his sleeves to enjoy himself, and

feeling himself born to be a "Saturday Reviewer." "Mark the local colour, the wool and the dirty water of the Dee—without doubt a name applied to one of their bigger ditches down there. Mark also the over-fervency of the touching line,

"'And loudly mourned their woolly dams,'

which, but for the sex of the writer and her evident genius, might be taken for an expression of a strength hardly permissible even in the metropolis."

The junior reporter filled his two columns and enjoyed himself in the doing of it. He concluded with the words: "The authoress will make a great success. If she will come to the capital, where genius is always appreciated, she will, without doubt, make her fortune. Nay, if Miss Bal—but again we cannot proceed for the want of an interpreter—if Miss B., we say, will only accept a position at Cleary's Waxworks and give readings from her poetry, or exhibit herself in the act of pronouncing her own name, she will be a greater draw in this city than Punch and Judy, or even the latest American advertising evangelist, who preaches standing on his head."

The junior reporter ceased here from very admiration at his own cleverness in so exactly hitting the tone of the masters of his craft, and handed his manuscript in to the editor.

It was the gloaming of a long June day when Rob Affleck, the woodman over at Barbrax, having been at New Dalry with a cart of wood, left

his horse on the roadside and ran over through Gavin's old short cut, now seldom used, to Janet's cottage with a paper in a yellow wrapper.

"Leave it on the step, and thank you kindly, Rob," said a weak voice within; and Rob, anxious about his horse and his bed, did so without another word. In a moment or two Janet crawled to the door, listened to make sure that Rob was really gone, opened the door, and protruded a hand wasted to the hard, flat bone—an arm that ought for years to have been full of flesh and noble curves.

When Janet got back to bed it was too dark to see anything except the big printing at the top of the paper.

"Two columns of it!" said Janet, with great thankfulness in her heart, lifting up her soul to God who had given her the power to sing. She strained her prematurely old and weary eyes to make out the sense. "A genuine source of pride to every native of the ancient province," she read.

"The Lord be praised!" said Janet, in a rapture of devout thankfulness; "though I never really doubted it," she added, as though asking pardon for a moment's distrust. "But I tried to write these poems to the glory of God and not to my own praise, and He will accept them and keep me humble under the praise of men as well as under their neglect."

So clutching the precious paper close to her breast, and letting tears of thankfulness fall on the

article, which, had they fallen on the head of the junior reporter, would have burned like fire, she patiently awaited the coming dawn.

"I can wait till the morning now to read the rest," she said.

So hour after hour, with her eyes wide, staring hard at the gray window-squares, she waited the dawn from the east. About half-past two there was a stirring and a moaning among the pines, and the roar of the sudden gust came with the breaking day through the dark arches. In the whirlwind there came a strange expectancy and tremor into the heart of the poetess, and she pressed the wet sheet of crumpled paper closer to her bosom, and turned to face the light. Through the spaces of the Long Wood of Barbrax there came a shining visitor, the Angel of the Presence, he who comes but once and stands a moment with a beckoning finger. Him she followed up through the wood.

They found Janet on the morning of the second day after, with a look so glad on her face, and so natural an expectation in the unclosed eye, that Rob Affleck spoke to her and expected an answer. The "Night Hawk" was clasped to her breast with a hand that they could not loosen. It went to the grave with her body. The ink had run a little here and there, where the tears had fallen thickest.

God is more merciful than man.

A DOCTOR OF THE OLD SCHOOL

BY

IAN MACLAREN

A DOCTOR OF THE OLD SCHOOL[1]

BY IAN MACLAREN

I

A GENERAL PRACTITIONER

DRUMTOCHTY was accustomed to break every law of health, except wholesome food and fresh air, and yet had reduced the psalmist's furthest limit to an average life-rate. Our men made no difference in their clothes for summer or winter, Drumsheugh and one or two of the larger farmers condescending to a top-coat on Sabbath, as a penalty of their position, and without regard to temperature. They wore their blacks at a funeral, refusing to cover them with anything, out of respect to the deceased, and standing longest in the kirkyard when the north wind was blowing across a hundred miles of snow. If the rain was pouring at the junction, then Drumtochty stood two minutes longer through sheer native dourness till each man had a cascade from the tail of his coat, and hazarded the suggestion, half-way to

[1] From "Beside the Bonnie Brier-bush," copyrighted, 1894, by Dodd, Mead & Co.

Kildrummie, that it had been "a bit scrowie," a "scrowie" being as far short of a "shoor" as a "shoor" fell below "weet."

This sustained defiance of the elements provoked occasional judgments in the shape of a "hoast" (cough), and the head of the house was then exhorted by his women folk to "change his feet" if he had happened to walk through a burn on his way home, and was pestered generally with sanitary precautions. It is right to add that the gudeman treated such advice with contempt, regarding it as suitable for the effeminacy of towns, but not seriously intended for Drumtochty. Sandy Stewart "napped" stones on the road in his shirt-sleeves, wet or fair, summer and winter, till he was persuaded to retire from active duty at eighty-five, and he spent ten years more in regretting his hastiness and criticising his successor. The ordinary course of life, with fine air and contented minds, was to do a full share of work till seventy, and then to look after "orra" jobs well into the eighties, and to "slip awa'" within sight of ninety. Persons above ninety were understood to be acquitting themselves with credit, and assumed airs of authority, brushing aside the opinions of seventy as immature, and confirming their conclusions with illustrations drawn from the end of last century.

When Hillocks's brother so far forgot himself as to "slip awa'" at sixty, that worthy man was scandalised, and offered laboured explanations at the "beerial."

"It 's an awfu' business ony wy ye look at it, an' a sair trial tae us a'. A' never heard tell o' sic a thing in oor family afore, an' it 's no easy accoontin' for 't.

"The gudewife was sayin' he wes never the same sin' a weet nicht he lost himsel' on the muir and slept below a bush; but that 's neither here nor there. A' 'm thinkin' he sappit his constitution thae twa years he wes grieve aboot England. That wes thirty years syne, but ye 're never the same aifter thae foreign climates."

Drumtochty listened patiently to Hillocks's apologia, but was not satisfied.

"It 's clean havers aboot the muir. Losh keep 's, we 've a' sleepit oot and never been a hair the waur.

"A' admit that England micht hae dune the job; it 's no canny stravagin' yon wy frae place tae place, but Drums never complained tae me as if he hed been nippit in the Sooth."

The parish had, in fact, lost confidence in Drums after his wayward experiment with a potato-digging machine, which turned out a lamentable failure, and his premature departure confirmed our vague impression of his character.

"He 's awa' noo," Drumsheugh summed up, after opinion had time to form; "an' there were waur fouk than Drums, but there 's nae doot he wes a wee flichty."

When illness had the audacity to attack a Drumtochty man, it was described as a "whup,"

and was treated by the men with a fine negligence. Hillocks was sitting in the post-office one afternoon when I looked in for my letters, and the right side of his face was blazing red. His subject of discourse was the prospects of the turnip "breer," but he casually explained that he was waiting for medical advice.

"The gudewife is keepin' up a ding-dong frae mornin' till nicht aboot ma face, and a' 'm fair deaved [deafened], so a' 'm watchin' for MacLure tae get a bottle as he comes wast; yon 's him noo."

The doctor made his diagnosis from horseback on sight, and stated the result with that admirable clearness which endeared him to Drumtochty:

"Confoond ye, Hillocks, what are ye ploiterin' aboot here for in the weet wi' a face like a boiled beet? Div ye no ken that ye 've a tetch o' the rose [erysipelas], and ocht tae be in the hoose? Gae hame wi' ye afore a' leave the bit, and send a haflin' for some medicine. Ye donnerd idiot, are ye ettlin tae follow Drums afore yir time?" And the medical attendant of Drumtochty continued his invective till Hillocks started, and still pursued his retreating figure with medical directions of a simple and practical character:

"A' 'm watchin', an' peety ye if ye pit aff time. Keep yir bed the mornin', and dinna show yir face in the fields till a' see ye. A' 'll gie ye a cry on Monday,—sic an auld fule,—but there 's no ane o' them tae mind anither in the hale pairish."

Hillocks's wife informed the kirkyard that the doctor "gied the gudeman an awfu' clearin'," and that Hillocks "wes keepin' the hoose," which meant that the patient had tea breakfast, and at that time was wandering about the farm buildings in an easy undress, with his head in a plaid.

It was impossible for a doctor to earn even the most modest competence from a people of such scandalous health, and so MacLure had annexed neighbouring parishes. His house—little more than a cottage—stood on the roadside among the pines toward the head of our Glen, and from this base of operations he dominated the wild glen that broke the wall of the Grampians above Drumtochty—where the snow-drifts were twelve feet deep in winter, and the only way of passage at times was the channel of the river—and the moorland district westward till he came to the Dunleith sphere of influence, where there were four doctors and a hydropathic. Drumtochty in its length, which was eight miles, and its breadth, which was four, lay in his hand; besides a glen behind, unknown to the world, which in the night-time he visited at the risk of life, for the way thereto was across the big moor with its peat-holes and treacherous bogs. And he held the land eastward toward Muirtown so far as Geordie. The Drumtochty post travelled every day, and could carry word that the doctor was wanted. He did his best for the need of every man, woman, and child in this wild, straggling district, year in, year

out, in the snow and in the heat, in the dark and in the light, without rest, and without holiday for forty years.

One horse could not do the work of this man, but we liked best to see him on his old white mare, who died the week after her master, and the passing of the two did our hearts good. It was not that he rode beautifully, for he broke every canon of art, flying with his arms, stooping till he seemed to be speaking into Jess's ears, and rising in the saddle beyond all necessity. But he could ride faster, stay longer in the saddle, and had a firmer grip with his knees than any one I ever met, and it was all for mercy's sake. When the reapers in harvest-time saw a figure whirling past in a cloud of dust, or the family at the foot of Glen Urtach, gathered round the fire on a winter's night, heard the rattle of a horse's hoofs on the road, or the shepherds, out after the sheep, traced a black speck moving across the snow to the upper glen, they knew it was the doctor, and, without being conscious of it, wished him God-speed.

Before and behind his saddle were strapped the instruments and medicines the doctor might want, for he never knew what was before him. There were no specialists in Drumtochty, so this man had to do everything as best he could, and as quickly. He was chest doctor, and doctor for every other organ as well; he was accoucheur and surgeon; he was oculist and aurist; he was dentist and chloroformist, besides being chemist and druggist.

It was often told how he was far up Glen Urtach when the feeders of the threshing-mill caught young Burnbrae, and how he only stopped to change horses at his house, and galloped all the way to Burnbrae, and flung himself off his horse, and amputated the arm, and saved the lad's life.

"You wud hae thocht that every meenut was an hour," said Jamie Soutar, who had been at the threshing, "an' a' 'll never forget the puir lad lyin' as white as deith on the floor o' the loft, wi' his head on a sheaf, and Burnbrae haudin' the bandage ticht an' prayin' a' the while, and the mither greetin' in the corner.

"'Will he never come?' she cries, an' a' heard the soond o' the horse's feet on the road a mile awa' in the frosty air.

"'The Lord be praised!' said Burnbrae, and a' slippit doon the ladder as the doctor came skelpin' intae the close, the foam fleein' frae his horse's mooth.

"'Whar is he?' wes a' that passed his lips, an' in five meenuts he hed him on the feedin' board, and wes at his wark—sic wark, neeburs! but he did it weel. An' ae thing a' thocht rael thochtfu' o' him: he first sent aff the laddie's mither tae get a bed ready.

"'Noo that 's feenished, and his constitution 'ill dae the rest,' and he carried the lad doon the ladder in his airms like a bairn, and laid him in his bed, and waits aside him till he wes sleepin', and then says he, 'Burnbrae, yir a gey lad never tae say,

"Collie, will ye lick?" for a' hevna tasted meat for saxteen hoors.'

"It was michty tae see him come intae the yaird that day, neeburs; the verra look o' him wes victory."

Jamie's cynicism slipped off in the enthusiasm of this reminiscence, and he expressed the feeling of Drumtochty. No one sent for MacLure save in great straits, and the sight of him put courage in sinking hearts. But this was not by the grace of his appearance, or the advantage of a good bedside manner. A tall, gaunt, loosely made man, without an ounce of superfluous flesh on his body, his face burned a dark brick colour by constant exposure to the weather, red hair and beard turning gray, honest blue eyes that look you ever in the face, huge hands with wrist-bones like the shank of a ham, and a voice that hurled his salutations across two fields, he suggested the moor rather than the drawing-room. But what a clever hand it was in an operation—as delicate as a woman's! and what a kindly voice it was in the humble room where the shepherd's wife was weeping by her man's bedside! He was "ill pitten thegither" to begin with, but many of his physical defects were the penalties of his work, and endeared him to the Glen. That ugly scar, that cut into his right eyebrow and gave him such a sinister expression, was got one night Jess slipped on the ice and laid him insensible eight miles from home. His limp marked the big snow-storm in the fifties, when his horse missed the road

in Glen Urtach, and they rolled together in a drift. MacLure escaped with a broken leg and the fracture of three ribs, but he never walked like other men again. He could not swing himself into the saddle without making two attempts and holding Jess's mane. Neither can you "warstle" through the peat-bogs and snow-drifts for forty winters without a touch of rheumatism. But they were honourable scars, and for such risks of life men get the Victoria Cross in other fields. MacLure got nothing but the secret affection of the Glen, which knew that none had ever done one tenth as much for it as this ungainly, twisted, battered figure, and I have seen a Drumtochty face soften at the sight of MacLure limping to his horse.

Mr. Hopps earned the ill-will of the Glen for ever by criticising the doctor's dress, but indeed it would have filled any townsman with amazement. Black he wore once a year, on sacrament Sunday, and, if possible, at a funeral; top-coat or waterproof never. His jacket and waistcoat were rough homespun of Glen Urtach wool, which threw off the wet like a duck's back, and below he was clad in shepherd's tartan trousers, which disappeared into unpolished riding-boots. His shirt was gray flannel, and he was uncertain about a collar, but certain as to a tie,—which he never had, his beard doing instead,—and his hat was soft felt of four colours and seven different shapes. His point of distinction in dress was the trousers, and they were the subject of unending speculation.

"Some threep that he 's worn thae eedentical pair the last twenty year, an' a' mind masel' him gettin' a tear ahint, when he was crossin' oor palin', and the mend 's still veesible.

"Ithers declare 'at he 's got a wab o' claith, and hes a new pair made in Muirtown aince in the twa year maybe, and keeps them in the garden till the new look wears aff.

"For ma ain pairt," Soutar used to declare, "a' canna mak' up my mind, but there 's ae thing sure: the Glen wudna like tae see him withoot them; it wud be a shock tae confidence. There 's no muckle o' the check left, but ye can aye tell it, and when ye see thae breeks comin' in ye ken that if human pooer can save yir bairn's life it 'ill be dune."

The confidence of the Glen—and tributary states—was unbounded, and rested partly on long experience of the doctor's resources, and partly on his hereditary connection.

"His father was here afore him," Mrs. Macfadyen used to explain; "atween them they 've hed the country-side for weel on tae a century; if MacLure disna understand oor constitution, wha dis, a' wud like tae ask?"

For Drumtochty had its own constitution and a special throat disease, as became a parish which was quite self-contained between the woods and the hills, and not dependent on the lowlands either for its diseases or its doctors.

"He 's a skilly man, Dr. MacLure," continued

my friend Mrs. Macfadyen, whose judgment on sermons or anything else was seldom at fault; "an' a kind-hearted, though o' coorse he hes his faults like us a', an' he disna tribble the kirk often.

"He aye can tell what 's wrong wi' a body, an' maistly he can put ye richt, and there 's nae new-fangled wys wi' him; a blister for the ootside an' Epsom salts for the inside dis his wark, an' they say there 's no an herb on the hills he disna ken.

"If we 're tae dee, we 're tae dee; an' if we 're tae live, we 're tae live," concluded Elspeth, with sound Calvinistic logic; "but a' 'll say this for the doctor, that, whether yir tae live or dee, he can aye keep up a sharp meisture on the skin.

"But he 's no verra ceevil gin ye bring him when there 's naethin' wrang," and Mrs. Macfadyen's face reflected another of Mr. Hopps's misadventures of which Hillocks held the copyright.

"Hopps's laddie ate grosarts [gooseberries] till they hed to sit up a' nicht wi' him, an' naethin' wud do but they maun hae the doctor, an' he writes 'immediately' on a slip o' paper.

"Weel, MacLure had been awa' a' nicht wi' a shepherd's wife Dunleith wy, and he comes here withoot drawin' bridle, mud up tae the een.

"'What 's adae here, Hillocks?' he cries; 'it 's no an accident, is 't?' and when he got aff his horse he cud hardly stand wi' stiffness and tire.

"'It 's nane o' us, doctor; it 's Hopps's laddie; he 's been eatin' ower-mony berries.'

"If he didna turn on me like a tiger!

"'Div ye mean tae say—'

"'Weesht, weesht,' an' I tried tae quiet him, for Hopps wes coomin' oot.

"'Well, doctor,' begins he, as brisk as a magpie, 'you 're here at last; there 's no hurry with you Scotchmen. My boy has been sick all night, and I 've never had a wink of sleep. You might have come a little quicker, that 's all I 've got to say.'

"'We 've mair tae dae in Drumtochty than attend tae every bairn that hes a sair stomach,' and a' saw MacLure was roosed.

"'I 'm astonished to hear you speak. Our doctor at home always says to Mrs. 'Opps, "Look on me as a family friend, Mrs. 'Opps, and send for me though it be only a headache."'

"'He 'd be mair spairin' o' his offers if he hed four and twenty mile tae look aifter. There 's naethin' wrang wi' yir laddie but greed. Gie him a gude dose o' castor-oil and stop his meat for a day, an' he 'ill be a'richt the morn.'

"'He 'ill not take castor-oil, doctor. We have given up those barbarous medicines.'

"'Whatna kind o' medicines hae ye noo in the Sooth?'

"'Well, you see, Dr. MacLure, we 're homœopathists, and I 've my little chest here,' and oot Hopps comes wi' his boxy.

"'Let 's see 't,' an' MacLure sits doon and tak's oot the bit bottles, and he reads the names wi' a lauch every time.

"'Belladonna; did ye ever hear the like? Aconite; it cowes a'. Nux vomica. What next? Weel, ma mannie,' he says tae Hopps, 'it 's a fine ploy, and ye 'ill better gang on wi' the nux till it 's dune, and gie him ony ither o' the sweeties he fancies.

"'Noo, Hillocks, a' maun be aff tae see Drumsheugh's grieve, for he 's doon wi' the fever, and it 's tae be a teuch fecht. A' hinna time tae wait for dinner; gie me some cheese an' cake in ma haund, and Jess 'ill take a pail o' meal an' water.

"'Fee? a' 'm no wantin' yir fees, man; wi' that boxy ye dinna need a doctor; na, na, gie yir siller tae some puir body, Maister Hopps,' an' he was doon the road as hard as he cud lick."

His fees were pretty much what the folk chose to give him, and he collected them once a year at Kildrummie fair.

"Weel, doctor, what am a' awin' ye for the wife and bairn? Ye 'ill need three notes for that nicht ye stayed in the hoose an' a' the veesits."

"Havers," MacLure would answer, "prices are low, a' 'm hearin'; gie 's thirty shillin's."

"No, a' 'll no, or the wife 'ill tak' ma ears aff," and it was settled for two pounds.

Lord Kilspindie gave him a free house and fields, and one way or other, Drumsheugh told me, the doctor might get in about one hundred and fifty pounds a year, out of which he had to pay his old housekeeper's wages and a boy's, and keep two horses, besides the cost of instruments and

books, which he bought through a friend in Edinburgh with much judgment.

There was only one man who ever complained of the doctor's charges, and that was the new farmer of Milton, who was so good that he was above both churches, and held a meeting in his barn. (It was Milton the Glen supposed at first to be a Mormon, but I can't go into that now.) He offered MacLure a pound less than he asked, and two tracts, whereupon MacLure expressed his opinion of Milton, both from a theological and social standpoint, with such vigour and frankness that an attentive audience of Drumtochty men could hardly contain themselves.

Jamie Soutar was selling his pig at the time, and missed the meeting, but he hastened to condole with Milton, who was complaining everywhere of the doctor's language.

"Ye did richt tae resist him; it 'ill maybe roose the Glen tae mak' a stand; he fair hands them in bondage.

"Thirty shillin's for twal' veesits, and him no mair than seeven mile awa', an' a' 'm telt there werena mair than four at nicht.

"Ye 'ill hae the sympathy o' the Glen, for a'body kens yir as free wi' yir siller as yir tracts.

"Wes 't 'Beware o' Gude Warks' ye offered him? Man, ye chose it weel, for he 's been colleckin' sae mony thae forty years, a' 'm feared for him.

"A' 've often thocht oor doctor 's little better than the Gude Samaritan, an' the Pharisees didna

think muckle o' his chance aither in this warld or that which is tae come."

II

THROUGH THE FLOOD

Dr. MacLure did not lead a solemn procession from the sick-bed to the dining-room, and give his opinion from the hearth-rug with an air of wisdom bordering on the supernatural, because neither the Drumtochty houses nor his manners were on that large scale. He was accustomed to deliver himself in the yard, and to conclude his directions with one foot in the stirrup; but when he left the room where the life of Annie Mitchell was ebbing slowly away, our doctor said not one word, and at the sight of his face her husband's heart was troubled.

He was a dull man, Tammas, who could not read the meaning of a sign, and laboured under a perpetual disability of speech; but love was eyes to him that day, and a mouth.

"Is 't as bad as yir lookin', doctor? Tell 's the truth. Wull Annie no come through?" and Tammas looked MacLure straight in the face, who never flinched his duty or said smooth things.

"A' wud gie onythin' tae say Annie has a chance, but a' daurna; a' doot yir gaein' to lose her, Tammas."

MacLure was in the saddle, and, as he gave his judgment, he laid his hand on Tammas's shoulder

with one of the rare caresses that pass between men.

"It 's a sair business, but ye 'ill play the man and no vex Annie; she 'ill dae her best, a' 'll warrant."

"And a' 'll dae mine," and Tammas gave MacLure's hand a grip that would have crushed the bones of a weakling. Drumtochty felt in such moments the brotherliness of this rough-looking man, and loved him.

Tammas hid his face in Jess's mane, who looked round with sorrow in her beautiful eyes, for she had seen many tragedies; and in this silent sympathy the stricken man drank his cup, drop by drop.

"A' wesna prepared for this, for a' aye thocht she wud live the langest. . . . She 's younger than me by ten year, and never was ill. . . . We 've been mairit twal' year last Martinmas, but it 's juist like a year the day. . . . A' wes never worthy o' her, the bonniest, snoddest [neatest], kindliest lass in the Glen. . . . A' never cud mak' oot hoo she ever lookit at me, 'at hesna hed ae word tae say aboot her till it 's ower-late. . . . She didna cuist up to me that a' wesna worthy o' her—no her; but aye she said, 'Yir ma ain gudeman, and nane cud be kinder tae me.' . . . An' a' wes minded tae be kind, but a' see noo mony little trokes a' micht hae dune for her, and noo the time is by. . . . Naebody kens hoo patient she wes wi' me, and aye made the best o' me, an' never pit me tae shame afore the fouk. . . . An' we never hed ae cross

word, no ane in twal' year. . . . We were mair nor man and wife—we were sweethearts a' the time. . . . Oh, ma bonnie lass, what 'ill the bairnies an' me dae without ye, Annie?"

The winter night was falling fast, the snow lay deep upon the ground, and the merciless north wind moaned through the close as Tammas wrestled with his sorrow dry-eyed, for tears were denied Drumtochty men. Neither the doctor nor Jess moved hand or foot, but their hearts were with their fellow-creature, and at length the doctor made a sign to Marget Howe, who had come out in search of Tammas, and now stood by his side.

"Dinna mourn tae the brakin' o' yir hert, Tammas," she said, "as if Annie an' you hed never luved. Neither death nor time can pairt them that luve; there 's naethin' in a' the warld sae strong as luve. If Annie gaes frae the sicht o' yir een she 'ill come the nearer tae yir hert. She wants tae see ye, and tae hear ye say that ye 'ill never forget her nicht nor day till ye meet in the land where there 's nae pairtin'. Oh, a' ken what a' 'm sayin', for it 's five year noo sin' George gied awa', an' he 's mair wi' me noo than when he wes in Edinboro' and I wes in Drumtochty."

"Thank ye kindly, Marget; thae are gude words an' true, an' ye hev the richt tae say them; but a' canna dae without seein' Annie comin' tae meet me in the gloamin', an' gaein' in an' oot the hoose, an' hearin' her ca' me by ma name; an' a' 'll no can

tell her that a' luve her when there 's nae Annie in the hoose.

"Can naethin' be dune, doctor? Ye savit Flora Cammil, and young Burnbrae, an' yon shepherd's wife Dunleith wy; an' we were a' sae prood o' ye, an' pleased tae think that ye hed keepit deith frae anither hame. Can ye no think o' somethin' tae help Annie, and gie her back tae her man and bairnies?" and Tammas searched the doctor's face in the cold, weird light.

"There 's nae pooer in heaven or airth like luve," Marget said to me afterward; "it mak's the weak strong and the dumb tae speak. Oor herts were as water afore Tammas's words, an' a' saw the doctor shake in his saddle. A' never kent till that meenut hoo he hed a share in a'body's grief, an' carried the heaviest wecht o' a' the Glen. A' peetied him wi' Tammas lookin' at him sae wistfully, as if he hed the keys o' life an' deith in his hands. But he wes honest, and wudna hold oot a false houp tae deceive a sore hert or win escape for himsel'."

"Ye needna plead wi' me, Tammas, to dae the best a' can for yir wife. Man, a' kent her lang afore ye ever luved her; a' brocht her intae the warld, and a' saw her through the fever when she wes a bit lassikie; a' closed her mither's een, and it wes me hed tae tell her she wes an orphan; an' nae man wes better pleased when she got a gude husband, and a' helpit her wi' her fower bairns. A' 've naither wife nor bairns o' ma own, an' a' coont a'

the fouk o' the Glen ma family. Div ye think a' wudna save Annie if I cud? If there wes a man in Muirtown 'at cud dae mair for her, a' 'd have him this verra nicht; but a' the doctors in Perthshire are helpless for this tribble.

"Tammas, ma puir fallow, if it could avail, a' tell ye a' wud lay doon this auld worn-oot ruckle o' a body o' mine juist tae see ye baith sittin' at the fireside, an' the bairns roond ye, couthy an' canty again; but it 's nae tae be, Tammas, it 's nae tae be."

"When a' lookit at the doctor's face," Marget said, "a' thocht him the winsomest man a' ever saw. He wes transfigured that nicht, for a' 'm judgin' there 's nae transfiguration like luve."

"It 's God's wull an' maun be borne, but it 's a sair wull fur me, an' a' 'm no ungratefu' tae you, doctor, for a' ye 've dune and what ye said the nicht," and Tammas went back to sit with Annie for the last time.

Jess picked her way through the deep snow to the main road, with a skill that came of long experience, and the doctor held converse with her according to his wont.

"Eh, Jess, wumman, yon wes the hardest wark a' hae tae face, and a' wud raither hae taen ma chance o' anither row in a Glen Urtach drift than tell Tammas Mitchell his wife wes deein'.

"A' said she cudna be cured, and it wes true, for there 's juist ae man in the land fit for 't, and they micht as weel try tae get the mune oot o'

heaven. Sae a' said naethin' tae vex Tammas's hert, for it 's heavy eneuch withoot regrets.

"But it 's hard, Jess, that money wull buy life after a', an' if Annie wes a duchess her man wudna lose her; but bein' only a puir cotter's wife, she maun dee afore the week 's oot.

"Gin we hed him the morn there 's little doot she wud be saved, for he hesna lost mair than five per cent. o' his cases, and they 'ill be puir toons-craturs, no strappin' women like Annie.

"It 's oot o' the question, Jess, sae hurry up, lass, for we 've hed a heavy day. But it wud be the grandest thing that wes ever dune in the Glen in oor time if it could be managed by hook or crook.

"We 'll gang and see Drumsheugh, Jess; he 's anither man sin' Geordie Hoo's deith, and he wes aye kinder than fouk kent." And the doctor passed at a gallop through the village, whose lights shone across the white frost-bound road.

"Come in by, doctor; a' heard ye on the road; ye 'ill hae been at Tammas Mitchell's; hoo 's the gudewife? a' doot she 's sober."

"Annie 's deein', Drumsheugh, an' Tammas is like tae brak his hert."

"That 's no lichtsome, doctor, no lichtsome, ava, for a' dinna ken ony man in Drumtochty sae bund up in his wife as Tammas, and there 's no a bonnier wumman o' her age crosses oor kirk door than Annie, nor a cleverer at her wark. Man, ye 'ill need tae pit yir brains in steep. Is she clean beyond ye?"

"Beyond me and every ither in the land but ane, and it wud cost a hundred guineas tae bring him tae Drumtochty."

"Certes, he 's no blate; it 's a fell chairge for a short day's work; but hundred or no hundred we 'ill hae him, and no let Annie gang, and her no half her years."

"Are ye meanin' it, Drumsheugh?" and MacLure turned white below the tan.

"William MacLure," said Drumsheugh, in one of the few confidences that ever broke the Drumtochty reserve, "a' 'm a lonely man, wi' naebody o' ma ain blude tae care for me livin', or tae lift me intae ma coffin when a' 'm deid.

"A' fecht awa' at Muirtown market for an extra pund on a beast, or a shillin' on the quarter o' barley, an' what 's the gude o' 't? Burnbrae gaes aff tae get a goon for his wife or a buke for his college laddie, an' Lachlan Campbell 'ill no leave the place noo withoot a ribbon for Flora.

"Ilka man in the Kildrummie train has some bit fairin' in his pooch for the fouk at hame that he 's bocht wi' the siller he won.

"But there 's naebody tae be lookin' oot for me, an' comin' doon the road tae meet me, and daffin' [joking] wi' me aboot their fairin', or feelin' ma pockets. Ou, ay! a' 've seen it a' at ither hooses, though they tried tae hide it frae me for fear a' wud lauch at them. Me lauch, wi' ma cauld, empty hame!

"Yir the only man kens, Weelum, that I aince

luved the noblest wumman in the Glen or onywhere, an' a' luve her still, but wi' anither luve noo.

"She hed given her hert tae anither, or a' 've thocht a' micht hae won her, though nae man be worthy o' sic a gift. Ma hert turned tae bitterness, but that passed awa' beside the brier-bush whar George Hoo lay yon sad simmer-time. Some day a' 'll tell ye ma story, Weelum, for you an' me are auld freends, and will be till we dee."

MacLure felt beneath the table for Drumsheugh's hand, but neither man looked at the other.

"Weel, a' we can dae noo, Weelum, gin we haena mickle brightness in oor ain hames, is tae keep the licht frae gaein' oot in anither hoose. Write the telegram, man, and Sandy 'ill send it aff frae Kildrummie this verra nicht, and ye 'ill hae yir man the morn."

"Yir the man a' coonted ye, Drumsheugh, but ye 'ill grant me ae favour. Ye 'ill lat me pay the half, bit by bit. A' ken yir wullin' tae dae 't a'; but a' haena mony pleesures, an' a' wud like tae hae ma ain share in savin' Annie's life."

Next morning a figure received Sir George on the Kildrummie platform, whom that famous surgeon took for a gillie, but who introduced himself as "MacLure of Drumtochty." It seemed as if the East had come to meet the West when these two stood together, the one in travelling furs, handsome and distinguished, with his strong, cul-

tured face and carriage of authority, a characteristic type of his profession; and the other more marvellously dressed than ever, for Drumsheugh's top-coat had been forced upon him for the occasion, his face and neck one redness with the bitter cold, rough and ungainly, yet not without some signs of power in his eye and voice, the most heroic type of his noble profession. MacLure compassed the precious arrival with observances till he was securely seated in Drumsheugh's dog-cart,—a vehicle that lent itself to history,—with two full-sized plaids added to his equipment—Drumsheugh and Hillocks had both been requisitioned; and MacLure wrapped another plaid round a leather case, which was placed below the seat with such reverence as might be given to the Queen's regalia. Peter attended their departure full of interest, and as soon as they were in the fir woods MacLure explained that it would be an eventful journey.

"It 's a'richt in here, for the wind disna get at the snaw; but the drifts are deep in the Glen, and th' 'ill be some engineerin' afore we get tae oor destination."

Four times they left the road and took their way over fields; twice they forced a passage through a slap in a dyke; thrice they used gaps in the paling which MacLure had made on his downward journey.

"A' seleckit the road this mornin', an' a' ken the depth tae an inch; we 'ill get through this

steadin' here tae the main road, but oor worst job 'ill be crossin' the Tochty.

"Ye see, the bridge hes been shakin' wi' this winter's flood, and we daurna venture on it, sae we hev tae ford, and the snaw 's been meltin' up Urtach way. There 's nae doot the water 's gey big, and it 's threatenin' tae rise, but we 'ill win through wi' a warstle.

"It micht be safer tae lift the instruments oot o' reach o' the water; wud ye mind haddin' them on yir knee till we 're ower, an' keep firm in yir seat in case we come on a stane in the bed o' the river."

By this time they had come to the edge, and it was not a cheering sight. The Tochty had spread out over the meadows, and while they waited they could see it cover another two inches on the trunk of a tree. There are summer floods, when the water is brown and flecked with foam, but this was a winter flood, which is black and sullen, and runs in the centre with a strong, fierce, silent current. Upon the opposite side Hillocks stood to give directions by word and hand, as the ford was on his land, and none knew the Tochty better in all its ways.

They passed through the shallow water without mishap, save when the wheel struck a hidden stone or fell suddenly into a rut; but when they neared the body of the river MacLure halted, to give Jess a minute's breathing.

"It 'ill tak' ye a' yir time, lass, an' a' wud raither

be on yir back; but ye never failed me yet, and a wumman's life is hangin' on the crossin'."

With the first plunge into the bed of the stream the water rose to the axles, and then it crept up to the shafts, so that the surgeon could feel it lapping in about his feet, while the dog-cart began to quiver, and it seemed as if it were to be carried away. Sir George was as brave as most men, but he had never forded a Highland river in flood, and the mass of black water racing past beneath, before, behind him, affected his imagination and shook his nerves. He rose from his seat and ordered MacLure to turn back, declaring that he would be condemned utterly and eternally if he allowed himself to be drowned for any person.

"Sit doon!" thundered MacLure. "Condemned ye will be, suner or later, gin ye shirk yir duty, but through the water ye gang the day."

Both men spoke much more strongly and shortly, but this is what they intended to say, and it was MacLure that prevailed.

Jess trailed her feet along the ground with cunning art, and held her shoulder against the stream; MacLure leaned forward in his seat, a rein in each hand, and his eyes fixed on Hillocks, who was now standing up to the waist in the water, shouting directions and cheering on horse and driver:

"Haud tae the richt, doctor; there 's a hole yonder. Keep oot o' 't for ony sake. That 's it; yir daein' fine. Steady, man, steady. Yir at the deepest; sit heavy in yir seats. Up the channel

noo, and ye 'ill be oot o' the swirl. Weel dune, Jess! weel dune, auld mare! Mak' straicht for me, doctor, an' a' 'll gie ye the road oot. Ma word, ye 've dune yir best, baith o' ye, this mornin'," cried Hillocks, splashing up to the dog-cart, now in the shallows.

"Sall, it wes titch an' go for a meenut in the middle; a Hielan' ford is a kittle [hazardous] road in the snaw-time, but ye 're safe noo.

"Gude luck tae ye up at Westerton, sir; nane but a richt-hearted man wud hae riskit the Tochty in flood. Ye 're boond tae succeed aifter sic a graund beginnin'," for it had spread already that a famous surgeon had come to do his best for Annie, Tammas Mitchell's wife.

Two hours later MacLure came out from Annie's room and laid hold of Tammas, a heap of speechless misery by the kitchen fire, and carried him off to the barn, and spread some corn on the threshing-floor, and thrust a flail into his hands.

"Noo we 've tae begin, an' we 'ill no be dune for an' 'oor, and ye 've tae lay on withoot stoppin' till a' come for ye; an' a' 'll shut the door tae haud in the noise, an' keep yir dog beside ye, for there maunna be a cheep aboot the hoose for Annie's sake."

"A' 'll dae onythin' ye want me, but if—if—"

"A' 'll come for ye, Tammas, gin there be danger; but what are ye feard for wi' the Queen's ain surgeon here?"

Fifty minutes did the flail rise and fall, save twice, when Tammas crept to the door and listened, the dog lifting his head and whining.

It seemed twelve hours instead of one when the door swung back, and MacLure filled the doorway, preceded by a great burst of light, for the sun had arisen on the snow.

His face was as tidings of great joy, and Elspeth told me that there was nothing like it to be seen that afternoon for glory, save the sun itself in the heavens.

"A' never saw the marrow o' 't, Tammas, an' a' 'll never see the like again; it 's a' ower, man, withoot a hitch frae beginnin' tae end, and she 's fa'in' asleep as fine as ye like."

"Dis he think Annie—'ill live?"

"Of coorse he dis, and be aboot the hoose inside a month; that 's the gude o' bein' a clean-bluided, weel-livin'—

"Preserve ye, man, what 's wrang wi' ye? It 's a mercy a' keppit ye, or we wud hev hed anither job for Sir George.

"Ye 're a'richt noo; sit doon on the strae. A' 'll come back in a whilie, an' ye 'ill see Annie, juist for a meenut, but ye maunna say a word."

Marget took him in and let him kneel by Annie's bedside.

He said nothing then or afterward, for speech came only once in his lifetime to Tammas, but Annie whispered, "Ma ain dear man."

When the doctor placed the precious bag beside Sir George in our solitary first next morning, he laid a check beside it and was about to leave.

"No, no!" said the great man. "Mrs. Macfadyen and I were on the gossip last night, and I know the whole story about you and your friend.

"You have some right to call me a coward, but I 'll never let you count me a mean, miserly rascal," and the check with Drumsheugh's painful writing fell in fifty pieces on the floor.

As the train began to move, a voice from the first called so that all in the station heard:

"Give 's another shake of your hand, MacLure; I 'm proud to have met you; you are an honour to our profession. Mind the antiseptic dressings."

It was market-day, but only Jamie Soutar and Hillocks had ventured down.

"Did ye hear yon, Hillocks? Hoo dae ye feel? A' 'll no deny a' 'm lifted."

Half-way to the Junction Hillocks had recovered, and began to grasp the situation.

"Tell 's what he said. A' wud like to hae it exact for Drumsheugh."

"Thae 's the eedentical words, an' they 're true; there 's no a man in Drumtochty disna ken that, except ane."

"An' wha 's that, Jamie?"

"It 's Weelum MacLure himsel'. Man, a' 've often girned that he sud fecht awa' for us a', and maybe dee before he kent that he hed githered mair luve than ony man in the Glen.

"'A' 'm prood tae hae met ye,' says Sir George, an' him the greatest doctor in the land. 'Yir an honour tae oor profession.'

"Hillocks, a' wudna hae missed it for twenty notes," said James Soutar, cynic in ordinary to the parish of Drumtochty.

WANDERING WILLIE'S TALE

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT

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"HONEST folks like me! How do ye ken whether I am honest, or what I am? I may be the deevil himsell for what ye ken, for he has power to come disguised like an angel of light; and, besides, he is a prime fiddler. He played a sonata to Corelli, ye ken."

There was something odd in this speech, and the tone in which it was said. It seemed as if my companion was not always in his constant mind, or that he was willing to try if he could frighten me. I laughed at the extravagance of his language, however, and asked him in reply if he was fool enough to believe that the foul fiend would play so silly a masquerade.

"Ye ken little about it—little about it," said the old man, shaking his head and beard, and knitting his brows. "I could tell ye something about that."

What his wife mentioned of his being a tale-teller as well as a musician now occurred to me; and as, you know, I like tales of superstition, I begged to have a specimen of his talent as we went along.

"It is very true," said the blind man, "that when I am tired of scraping thairm or singing

ballants I whiles make a tale serve the turn among the country bodies; and I have some fearsome anes, that make the auld carlines shake on the settle, and the bits o' bairns skirl on their minnies out frae their beds. But this that I am going to tell you was a thing that befell in our ain house in my father's time—that is, my father was then a hafflins callant; and I tell it to you, that it may be a lesson to you that are but a young thoughtless chap, wha ye draw up wi' on a lonely road; for muckle was the dool and care that came o' 't to my gudesire."

He commenced his tale accordingly, in a distinct narrative tone of voice, which he raised and depressed with considerable skill; at times sinking almost into a whisper, and turning his clear but sightless eyeballs upon my face, as if it had been possible for him to witness the impression which his narrative made upon my features. I will not spare a syllable of it, although it be of the longest; so I make a dash—and begin:

Ye maun have heard of Sir Robert Redgauntlet of that ilk, who lived in these parts before the dear years. The country will lang mind him; and our fathers used to draw breath thick if ever they heard him named. He was out wi' the Hielandmen in Montrose's time; and again he was in the hills wi' Glencairn in the saxteen hundred and fifty-twa; and sae when King Charles the Second came in, wha was in sic favour as the laird of Redgaunt-

let? He was knighted at Lonon Court, wi' the king's ain sword; and being a red-hot prelatist, he came down here, rampauging like a lion, with commissions of lieutenancy (and of lunacy, for what I ken), to put down a' the Whigs and Covenanters in the country. Wild wark they made of it; for the Whigs were as dour as the Cavaliers were fierce, and it was which should first tire the other. Redgauntlet was aye for the strong hand; and his name is kend as wide in the country as Claverhouse's or Tam Dalyell's. Glen, nor dargle, nor mountain, nor cave could hide the puir hill-folk when Redgauntlet was out with bugle and bloodhound after them, as if they had been sae mony deer. And, troth, when they fand them, they didna make muckle mair ceremony than a Hielandman wi' a roebuck. It was just, "Will ye tak' the test?" If not—"Make ready—present—fire!" and there lay the recusant.

Far and wide was Sir Robert hated and feared. Men thought he had a direct compact with Satan; that he was proof against steel, and that bullets happed aff his buff-coat like hailstanes from a hearth; that he had a mear that would turn a hare on the side of Carrifra-gauns;[1] and muckle to the same purpose, of whilk mair anon. The best blessing they wared on him was, "Deil scowp wi' Redgauntlet!" He wasna a bad master to his ain folk, though, and was weel aneugh liked by his tenants; and as for the lackeys and troopers

[1] A precipitous side of a mountain in Moffatdale.

that rade out wi' him to the persecutions, as the Whigs caa'd those killing-times, they wad hae drunken themsells blind to his health at ony time.

Now you are to ken that my gudesire lived on Redgauntlet's grund—they ca' the place Primrose Knowe. We had lived on the grund, and under the Redgauntlets, since the riding-days, and lang before. It was a pleasant bit; and I think the air is callerer and fresher there than onywhere else in the country. It 's a' deserted now; and I sat on the broken door-cheek three days since, and was glad I couldna see the plight the place was in—but that 's a' wide o' the mark. There dwelt my gudesire, Steenie Steenson; a rambling, rattling chiel' he had been in his young days, and could play weel on the pipes; he was famous at "hoopers and girders," a' Cumberland couldna touch him at "Jockie Lattin," and he had the finest finger for the back-lilt between Berwick and Carlisle. The like o' Steenie wasna the sort that they made Whigs o'. And so he became a Tory, as they ca' it, which we now ca' Jacobites, just out of a kind of needcessity, that he might belang to some side or other. He had nae ill-will to the Whig bodies, and liked little to see the blude rin, though, being obliged to follow Sir Robert in hunting and hoisting, watching and warding, he saw muckle mischief, and maybe did some that he couldna avoid.

Now Steenie was a kind of favourite with his master, and kend a' the folk about the castle, and

was often sent for to play the pipes when they were at their merriment. Auld Dougal MacCallum, the butler, that had followed Sir Robert through gude and ill, thick and thin, pool and stream, was specially fond of the pipes, and aye gae my gudesire his gude word wi' the laird; for Dougal could turn his master round his finger.

Weel, round came the Revolution, and it had like to hae broken the hearts baith of Dougal and his master. But the change was not a'thegether sae great as they feared and other folk thought for. The Whigs made an unco crawing what they wad do with their auld enemies, and in special wi' Sir Robert Redgauntlet. But there were owermony great folks dipped in the same doings to make a spick-and-span new warld. So Parliament passed it a' ower easy; and Sir Robert, bating that he was held to hunting foxes instead of Covenanters, remained just the man he was.[1] His revel was as loud, and his hall as weel lighted, as ever it had been, though maybe he lacked the fines of the nonconformists, that used to come to stock his larder and cellar; for it is certain he began to be

[1] The caution and moderation of King William III., and his principles of unlimited toleration, deprived the Cameronians of the opportunity they ardently desired, to retaliate the injuries which they had received during the reign of prelacy, and purify the land, as they called it, from the pollution of blood. They esteemed the Revolution, therefore, only a half-measure, which neither comprehended the rebuilding the kirk in its full splendor, nor the revenge of the death of the saints on their persecutors.

keener about the rents than his tenants used to find him before, and they behooved to be prompt to the rent-day, or else the laird wasna pleased. And he was sic an awsome body that naebody cared to anger him; for the oaths he swore, and the rage that he used to get into, and the looks that he put on made men sometimes think him a devil incarnate.

Weel, my gudesire was nae manager—no that he was a very great misguider—but he hadna the saving gift, and he got twa terms' rent in arrear. He got the first brash at Whitsunday put ower wi' fair word and piping; but when Martinmas came there was a summons from the grund officer to come wi' the rent on a day preceese, or else Steenie behooved to flit. Sair wark he had to get the siller; but he was weel freended, and at last he got the haill scraped thegether—a thousand merks. The maist of it was from a neighbour they caa'd Laurie Lapraik—a sly tod. Laurie had wealth o' gear, could hunt wi' the hound and rin wi' the hare, and be Whig or Tory, saunt or sinner, as the wind stood. He was a professor in this Revolution warld, but he liked an orra sough of this warld, and a tune on the pipes. weel aneugh at a by-time; and, bune a', he thought he had gude security for the siller he len my gudesire ower the stocking at Primrose Knowe.

Away trots my gudesire to Redgauntlet Castle wi' a heavy purse and a light heart, glad to be out of the laird's danger. Weel, the first thing he

learned at the castle was that Sir Robert had fretted himsell into a fit of the gout because he did no appear before twelve o'clock. It wasna a'thegether for sake of the money, Dougal thought, but because he didna like to part wi' my gudesire aff the grund. Dougal was glad to see Steenie, and brought him into the great oak parlour; and there sat the laird his leesome lane, excepting thar he had beside him a great, ill-favoured jackanape that was a special pet of his. A cankered beast it was, and mony an ill-natured trick it played; ill to please it was, and easily angered—ran about the haill castle, chattering and rowling, and pinching and biting folk, specially before ill weather, or disturbance in the state. Sir Robert caa'd it Major Weir, after the warlock that was burnt;[1] and few folk liked either the name or the conditions of the creature—they thought there was something in it by ordinar—and my gudesire was not just easy in mind when the door shut on him, and he saw himsell in the room wi' naebody but the laird, Dougal MacCallum, and the major—a thing that hadna chanced to him before.

Sir Robert sat, or, I should say, lay, in a great arm-chair, wi' his grand velvet gown, and his feet on a cradle; for he had baith gout and gravel, and his face looked as gash and ghastly as Satan's. Major Weir sat opposite to him, in a red-laced coat, and the laird's wig on his head; and aye as

[1] A celebrated wizard, executed at Edinburgh for sorcery and other crimes.

Sir Robert girned wi' pain, the jackanape girned too, like a sheep's head between a pair of tangs—an ill-faur'd, fearsome couple they were. The laird's buff-coat was hung on a pin behind him, and his broadsword and his pistols within reach; for he keepit up the auld fashion of having the weapons ready, and a horse saddled day and night, just as he used to do when he was able to loup on horseback, and sway after ony of the hill-folk he could get speerings of. Some said it was for fear of the Whigs taking vengeance, but I judge it was just his auld custom—he wasna gine not fear onything. The rental-book, wi' its black cover and brass clasps, was lying beside him; and a book of sculduddery sangs was put betwixt the leaves, to keep it open at the place where it bore evidence against the goodman of Primrose Knowe, as behind the hand with his mails and duties. Sir Robert gave my gudesire a look, as if he would have withered his heart in his bosom. Ye maun ken he had a way of bending his brows that men saw the visible mark of a horseshoe in his forehead, deep-dinted, as if it had been stamped there.

"Are ye come light-handed, ye son of a toom whistle?" said Sir Robert. "Zounds! if you are—"

My gudesire, with as gude a countenance as he could put on, made a leg, and placed the bag of money on the table wi' a dash, like a man that does something clever. The laird drew it to him hastily. "Is all here, Steenie, man?"

"Your honour will find it right," said my gudesire.

"Here, Dougal," said the laird, "gie Steenie a tass of brandy, till I count the siller and write the receipt."

But they werena weel out of the room when Sir Robert gied a yelloch that garr'd the castle rock. Back ran Dougal; in flew the liverymen; yell on yell gied the laird, ilk ane mair awfu' than the ither. My gudesire knew not whether to stand or flee, but he ventured back into the parlour, where a' was gaun hirdie-girdie—naebody to say "come in" or "gae out." Terribly the laird roared for cauld water to his feet, and wine to cool his throat; and 'Hell, hell, hell, and its flames', was aye the word in his mouth. They brought him water, and when they plunged his swoln feet into the tub, he cried out it was burning; and folks say that it *did* bubble and sparkle like a seething cauldron. He flung the cup at Dougal's head and said he had given him blood instead of Burgundy; and, sure aneugh, the lass washed clotted blood aff the carpet the neist day. The jackanape they caa'd Major Weir, it jibbered and cried as if it was mocking its master. My gudesire's head was like to turn; he forgot baith siller and receipt, and downstairs he banged; but, as he ran, the shrieks came fainter and fainter; there was a deep-drawn shivering groan, and word gaed through the castle that the laird was dead.

Weel, away came my gudesire wi' his finger in

his mouth, and his best hope was that Dougal had seen the money-bag and heard the laird speak of writing the receipt. The young laird, now Sir John, came from Edinburgh to see things put to rights. Sir John and his father never 'greed weel. Sir John had been bred an advocate, and afterward sat in the last Scots Parliament and voted for the Union, having gotten, it was thought, a rug of the compensations—if his father could have come out of his grave he would have brained him for it on his awn hearthstane. Some thought it was easier counting with the auld rough knight than the fair-spoken young ane—but mair of that anon.

Dougal MacCallum, poor body, neither grat nor graned, but gaed about the house looking like a corpse, but directing, as was his duty, a' the order of the grand funeral. Now Dougal looked aye waur and waur when night was coming, and was aye the last to gang to his bed, whilk was in a little round just opposite the chamber of dais, whilk his master occupied while he was living, and where he now lay in state, as they caa'd it, weel-aday! The night before the funeral Dougal could keep his awn counsel nae longer; he came doun wi' his proud spirit, and fairly asked auld Hutcheon to sit in his room with him for an hour. When they were in the round, Dougal took a tass of brandy to himsell, and gave another to Hutcheon, and wished him all health and lang life, and said that, for himsell, he wasna lang for this world; for that every night since Sir Robert's death his silver

call had sounded from the state chamber just as it used to do at nights in his lifetime to call Dougal to help to turn him in his bed. Dougal said that, being alone with the dead on that floor of the tower (for naebody cared to wake Sir Robert Redgauntlet like another corpse), he had never daured to answer the call, but that now his conscience checked him for neglecting his duty; for, "though death breaks service," said MacCallum, "it shall never weak my service to Sir Robert; and I will answer his next whistle, so be you will stand by me, Hutcheon."

Hutcheon had nae will to the wark, but he had stood by Dougal in battle and broil, and he wad not fail him at this pinch; so doun the carles sat ower a stoup of brandy, and Hutcheon, who was something of a clerk, would have read a chapter of the Bible; but Dougal would hear naething but a blaud of Davie Lindsay, whilk was the waur preparation.

When midnight came, and the house was quiet as the grave, sure enough the silver whistle sounded as sharp and shrill as if Sir Robert was blowing it; and up got the twa auld serving-men, and tottered into the room where the dead man lay. Hutcheon saw aneugh at the first glance; for there were torches in the room, which showed him the foul fiend, in his ain shape, sitting on the laird's coffin! Ower he couped as if he had been dead. He could not tell how lang he lay in a trance at the door, but when he gathered himsell he cried on

his neighbour, and getting nae answer raised the house, when Dougal was found lying dead within twa steps of the bed where his master's coffin was placed. As for the whistle, it was gane anes and aye; but mony a time was it heard at the top of the house on the bartizan, and amang the auld chimneys and turrets where the howlets have their nests. Sir John hushed the matter up, and the funeral passed over without mair bogie wark.

But when a' was ower, and the laird was beginning to settle his affairs, every tenant was called up for his arrears, and my gudesire for the full sum that stood against him in the rental-book. Weel, away he trots to the castle to tell his story, and there he is introduced to Sir John, sitting in his father's chair, in deep mourning, with weepers and hanging cravat, and a small walking-rapier by his side, instead of the auld broadsword that had a hunderweight of steel about it, what with blade, chape, and basket-hilt. I have heard their communings so often tauld ower that I almost think I was there mysell, though I couldna be born at the time. (In fact, Alan, my companion, mimicked, with a good deal of humour, the flattering, conciliating tone of the tenant's address and the hypocritical melancholy of the laird's reply. His grandfather, he said, had, while he spoke, his eye fixed on the rental-book, as if it were a mastiff-dog that he was afraid would spring up and bite him.)

"I wuss ye joy, sir, of the head seat and the white loaf and the brid lairdship. Your father was

a kind man to freends and followers; muckle grace to you, Sir John, to fill his shoon—his boots, I suld say, for he seldom wore shoon, unless it were muils when he had the gout."

"Ay, Steenie," quoth the laird, sighing deeply, and putting his napkin to his een, "his was a sudden call, and he will be missed in the country; no time to set his house in order—weel prepared Godward, no doubt, which is the root of the matter; but left us behind a tangled hesp to wind, Steenie. Hem! hem! We maun go to business, Steenie; much to do, and little time to do it in."

Here he opened the fatal volume. I have heard of a thing they call Doomsday-book—I am clear it has been a rental of back-ganging tenants.

"Stephen," said Sir John, still in the same soft, sleekit tone of voice—"Stephen Stevenson, or Steenson, ye are down here for a year's rent behind the hand—due at last term."

Stephen. Please your honour, Sir John, I paid it to your father.

Sir John. Ye took a receipt, then, doubtless, Stephen, and can produce it?

Stephen. Indeed, I hadna time, an it like your honour; for nae sooner had I set doun the siller, and just as his honour, Sir Robert, that 's gaen, drew it ill him to count it and write out the receipt, he was ta'en wi' the pains that removed him.

"That was unlucky," said Sir John, after a pause. "But ye maybe paid it in the presence of somebody. I want but a *talis qualis* evidence,

Stephen. I would go ower-strictly to work with no poor man."

Stephen. Troth, Sir John, there was naebody in the room but Dougal MacCallum, the butler. But, as your honour kens, he has e'en followed his auld master.

"Very unlucky again, Stephen," said Sir John, without altering his voice a single note. "The man to whom ye paid the money is dead, and the man who witnessed the payment is dead too; and the siller, which should have been to the fore, is neither seen nor heard tell of in the repositories. How am I to believe a' this?"

Stephen. I dinna ken, your honour; but there is a bit memorandum note of the very coins, for, God help me! I had to borrow out of twenty purses; and I am sure that ilka man there set down will take his grit oath for what purpose I borrowed the money.

Sir John. I have little doubt ye *borrowed* the money, Steenie. It is the *payment* that I want to have proof of.

Stephen. The siller maun be about the house, Sir John. And since your honour never got it, and his honour that was canna have ta'en it wi' him, maybe some of the family may hae seen it.

Sir John. We will examine the servants, Stephen; that is but reasonable.

But lackey and lass, and page and groom, all denied stoutly that they had ever seen such a bag of money as my gudesire described. What saw

waur, he had unluckily not mentioned to any living soul of them his purpose of paying his rent. Ae quean had noticed something under his arm, but she took it for the pipes.

Sir John Redgauntlet ordered the servants out of the room and then said to my gudesire, "Now, Steenie, ye see ye have fair play; and, as I have little doubt ye ken better where to find the siller than ony other body, I beg in fair terms, and for your own sake, that you will end this fasherie; for, Stephen, ye maun pay or flit."

"The Lord forgie your opinion," said Stephen, driven almost to his wits' end—"I am an honest man."

"So am I, Stephen," said his honour; "and so are all the folks in the house, I hope. But if there be a knave among us, it must be he that tells the story he cannot prove." He paused, and then added, mair sternly: "If I understand your trick, sir, you want to take advantage of some malicious reports concerning things in this family, and particularly respecting my father's sudden death, thereby to cheat me out of the money, and perhaps take away my character by insinuating that I have received the rent I am demanding. Where do you suppose this money to be? I insist upon knowing."

My gudesire saw everything look so muckle against him that he grew nearly desperate. However, he shifted from one foot to another, looked to every corner of the room, and made no answer.

"Speak out, sirrah," said the laird, assuming a look of his father's, a very particular ane, which he had when he was angry—it seemed as if the wrinkles of his frown made that selfsame fearful shape of a horse's shoe in the middle of his brow; "speak out, sir! I *will* know your thoughts; do you suppose that I have this money?"

"Far be it frae me to say so," said Stephen.

"Do you charge any of my people with having taken it?"

"I wad be laith to charge them that may be innocent," said my gudesire; "and if there be any one that is guilty, I have nae proof."

"Somewhere the money must be, if there is a word of truth in your story," said Sir John; "I ask where you think it is—and demand a correct answer!"

"In hell, if you *will* have my thoughts of it," said my gudesire, driven to extremity—"in hell! with your father, his jackanape, and his silver whistle."

Down the stairs he ran (for the parlour was nae place for him after such a word), and he heard the laird swearing blood and wounds behind him, as fast as ever did Sir Robert, and roaring for the bailie and the baron-officer.

Away rode my gudesire to his chief creditor (him they caa'd Laurie Lapraik), to try if he could make onything out of him; but when he tauld his story, he got but the worst word in his wame—thief, beggar, and dyvour were the saftest terms;

and to the boot of these hard terms, Laurie brought up the auld story of dipping his hand in the blood of God's saunts, just as if a tenant could have helped riding with the laird, and that a laird like Sir Robert Redgauntlet. My gudesire was, by this time, far beyond the bounds of patience, and, while he and Laurie were at deil speed the liars, he was wanchancie aneugh to abuse Lapraik's doctrine as weel as the man, and said things that garr'd folks' flesh grue that heard them—he wasna just himsell, and he had lived wi' a wild set in his day.

At last they parted, and my gudesire was to ride hame through the wood of Pitmurkie, that is a' fou of black firs, as they say. I ken the wood, but the firs may be black or white for what I can tell. At the entry of the wood there is a wild common, and on the edge of the common a little lonely change-house, that was keepit then by an hostler wife,—they suld hae caa'd her Tibbie Faw,—and there puir Steenie cried for a mutchkin of brandy, for he had had no refreshment the haill day. Tibbie was earnest wi' him to take a bite of meat, but he couldna think o' 't, nor would he take his foot out of the stirrup, and took off the brandy wholely at twa draughts, and named a toast at each. The first was, the memory of Sir Robert Redgauntlet, and may he never lie quiet in his grave till he had righted his poor bond-tenant; and the second was, a health to Man's Enemy, if he would but get him back the pock of siller, or tell him what came o' 't, for he saw the haill world was like to regard

him as a thief and a cheat, and he took that waur than even the ruin of his house and hauld.

On he rode, little caring where. It was a dark night turned, and the trees made it yet darker, and he let the beast take its ain road through the wood; when all of a sudden, from tired and wearied that it was before, the nag began to spring and flee and stend, that my gudesire could hardly keep the saddle. Upon the whilk, a horseman, suddenly riding up beside him, said, "That 's a mettle beast of yours, freend; will you sell him?" So saying, he touched the horse's neck with his riding-wand, and it fell into its auld heigh-ho of a stumbling trot. "But his spunk 's soon out of him, I think," continued the stranger, "and that is like mony a man's courage, that thinks he wad do great things."

My gudesire scarce listened to this, but spurred his horse, with "Gude-e'en to you, freend."

But it 's like the stranger was ane that doesna lightly yield his point; for, ride as Steenie liked, he was aye beside him at the selfsame pace. At last my gudesire, Steenie Steenson, grew half angry, and, to say the truth, half feard.

"What is it that you want with me, freend?" he said. "If ye be a robber, I have nae money; if ye be a leal man, wanting company, I have nae heart to mirth or speaking; and if ye want to ken the road, I scarce ken it mysell."

"If you will tell me your grief," said the stranger, "I am one that, though I have been

sair miscaa'd in the world, am the only hand for helping my freends."

So my gudesire, to ease his ain heart, mair than from any hope of help, told him the story from beginning to end.

"It 's a hard pinch," said the stranger; "but I think I can help you."

"If you could lend the money, sir, and take a lang day—I ken nae other help on earth," said my gudesire.

"But there may be some under the earth," said the stranger. "Come, I 'll be frank wi' you; I could lend you the money on bond, but you would maybe scruple my terms. Now I can tell you that your auld laird is disturbed in his grave by your curses and the wailing of your family, and if ye daur venture to go to see him, he will give you the receipt."

My gudesire's hair stood on end at this proposal, but he thought his companion might be some humoursome chield that was trying to frighten him, and might end with lending him the money. Besides, he was bauld wi' brandy, and desperate wi' distress; and he said he had courage to go to the gate of hell, and a step farther, for that receipt. The stranger laughed.

Weel, they rode on through the thickest of the wood, when, all of a sudden, the horse stopped at the door of a great house; and, but that he knew the place was ten miles off, my father would have

thought he was at Redgauntlet Castle. They rode into the outer courtyard, through the muckle faulding yetts, and aneath the auld portcullis; and the whole front of the house was lighted, and there were pipes and fiddles, and as much dancing and deray within as used to be at Sir Robert's house at Pace and Yule, and such high seasons. They lap off, and my gudesire, as seemed to him, fastened his horse to the very ring he had tied him to that morning when he gaed to wait on the young Sir John.

"God!" said my gudesire, "if Sir Robert's death be but a dream!"

He knocked at the ha' door just as he was wont, and his auld acquaintance, Dougal MacCallum—just after his wont, too—came to open the door, and said, "Piper Steenie, are ye there, lad? Sir Robert has been crying for you."

My gudesire was like a man in a dream—he looked for the stranger, but he was gane for the time. At last he just tried to say, "Ha! Dougal Driveower, are you living? I thought ye had been dead."

"Never fash yoursell wi' me," said Dougal, "but look to yoursell; and see ye tak' naething frae onybody here, neither meat, drink, or siller, except the receipt that is your ain."

So saying, he led the way out through halls and trances that were weel kend to my gudesire, and into the auld oak parlour; and there was as much singing of profane sangs, and birling of red wine,

and blasphemy and sculduddery, as had ever been in Redgauntlet Castle when it was at the blythest.

But Lord take us in keeping! what a set of ghastly revellers there were that sat around that table! My gudesire kend mony that had long before gane to their place, for often had he piped to the most part in the hall of Redgauntlet. There was the fierce Middleton, and the dissolute Rothes, and the crafty Lauderdale; and Dalyell, with his bald head and a beard to his girdle; and Earlshall, with Cameron's blude on his hand; and wild Bonshaw, that tied blessed Mr. Cargill's limbs till the blude sprung; and Dumbarton Douglas, the twice-turned traitor baith to country and king. There was the Bludy Advocate MacKenyie, who, for his worldly wit and wisdom, had been to the rest as a god. And there was Claverhouse, as beautiful as when he lived, with his long, dark, curled locks streaming down over his laced buff-coat, and with his left hand always on his right spule-blade, to hide the wound that the silver bullet had made.[1] He sat apart from them all, and looked at them with a melancholy, haughty countenance; while the rest hallooed and sang and laughed, that the room rang. But their smiles were fearfully con-

[1] The personages here mentioned are most of them characters of historical fame; but those less known and remembered may be found in the tract entitled "The Judgment and Justice of God Exemplified; or, A Brief Historical Account of some of the Wicked Lives and Miserable Deaths of some of the most remarkable Apostates and bloody Persecutors, from the Reformation till after the Revolution."

torted from time to time; and their laughter passed into such wild sounds as made my gudesire's very nails grow blue, and chilled the marrow in his banes.

They that waited at the table were just the wicked serving-men and troopers that had done their work and cruel bidding on earth. There was the Lang Lad of the Nethertown, that helped to take Argyle; and the bishop's summoner, that they called the Deil's Rattlebag; and the wicked guardsmen in their laced coats; and the savage Highland Amorites, that shed blood like water; and mony a proud serving-man, haughty of heart and bloody of hand, cringing to the rich, and making them wickeder than they would be; grinding the poor to powder when the rich had broken them to fragments. And mony, mony mair were coming and ganging, a' as busy in their vocation as if they had been alive.

Sir Robert Redgauntlet, in the midst of a' this fearful riot, cried, wi' a voice like thunder, on Steenie Piper to come to the board-head where he was sitting, his legs stretched out before him, and swathed up with flannel, with his holster pistols aside him, while the great broadsword rested against his chair, just as my gudesire had seen him the last time upon earth; the very cushion for the jackanape was close to him, but the creature itsell was not there—it wasna its hour, it 's likely; for he heard them say, as he came forward, "Is not the major come yet?" And another answered,

"The jackanape will be here betimes the morn." And when my gudesire came forward, Sir Robert, or his ghaist, or the deevil in his likeness, said, "Weel, piper, hae ye settled wi' my son for the year's rent?"

With much ado my father gat breath to say that Sir John would not settle without his honour's receipt.

"Ye shall hae that for a tune of the pipes, Steenie," said the appearance of Sir Robert—"play us up 'Weel Hoddled, Luckie.'"

Now this was a tune my gudesire learned frae a warlock, that heard it when they were worshipping Satan at their meetings; and my gudesire had sometimes played it at the ranting suppers in Redgauntlet Castle, but never very willingly; and now he grew cauld at the very name of it, and said, for excuse, he hadna his pipes wi' him.

"MacCallum, ye limb of Beelzebub," said the fearfu' Sir Robert, "bring Steenie the pipes that I am keeping for him!"

MacCallum brought a pair of pipes might have served the piper of Donald of the Isles. But he gave my gudesire a nudge as he offered them; and looking secretly and closely, Steenie saw that the chanter was of steel, and heated to a white heat; so he had fair warning not to trust his fingers with it. So he excused himsell again, and said he was faint and frightened, and had not wind aneugh to fill the bag.

"Then ye maun eat and drink, Steenie," said

the figure; "for we do little else here; and it 's ill speaking between a fou man and a fasting." Now these were the very words that the bloody Earl of Douglas said to keep the king's messenger in hand while he cut the head off MacLellan of Bombie, at the Threave Castle;[1] and that put Steenie mair and mair on his guard. So he spoke up like a man, and said he came neither to eat nor drink, nor make minstrelsy; but simply for his ain—to ken what was come o' the money he had paid, and to get a discharge for it; and he was so stout-hearted by this time that he charged Sir Robert for conscience's sake (he had no power to say the holy name), and as he hoped for peace and rest, to spread no snares for him, but just to give him his ain.

The appearance gnashed its teeth and laughed, but it took from a large pocket-book the receipt, and handed it to Steenie. "There is your receipt, ye pitiful cur; and for the money, my dog-whelp of a son may go look for it in the Cat's Cradle."

My gudesire uttered mony thanks, and was about to retire, when Sir Robert roared aloud, "Stop, though, thou sack-doudling son of a —! I am not done with thee. HERE we do nothing for nothing; and you must return on this very day twelvemonth to pay your master the homage that you owe me for my protection."

My father's tongue was loosed of a suddenty, and

[1] The reader is referred for particulars to Pitscottie's "History of Scotland."

he said aloud, "I refer myself to God's pleasure, and not to yours."

He had no sooner uttered the word than all was dark around him; and he sank on the earth with such a sudden shock that he lost both breath and sense.

How lang Steenie lay there he could not tell; but when he came to himsell he was lying in the auld kirkyard of Redgauntlet parochine, just at the door of the family aisle, and the scutcheon of the auld knight, Sir Robert, hanging over his head. There was a deep morning fog on grass and gravestane around him, and his horse was feeding quietly beside the minister's twa cows. Steenie would have thought the whole was a dream, but he had the receipt in his hand fairly written and signed by the auld laird; only the last letters of his name were a little disorderly, written like one seized with sudden pain.

Sorely troubled in his mind, he left that dreary place, rode through the mist to Redgauntlet Castle, and with much ado he got speech of the laird.

"Well, you dyvour bankrupt," was the first word, "have you brought me my rent?"

"No," answered my gudesire, "I have not; but I have brought your honour Sir Robert's receipt for it."

"How, sirrah? Sir Robert's receipt! You told me he had not given you one."

"Will your honour please to see if that bit line is right?"

Sir John looked at every line, and at every letter, with much attention; and at last at the date, which my gudesire had not observed—"From my appointed place," he read, "this twenty-fifth of November."

"What! That is yesterday! Villain, thou must have gone to hell for this!"

"I got it from your honour's father; whether he be in heaven or hell, I know not," said Steenie.

"I will debate you for a warlock to the Privy Council!" said Sir John. "I will send you to your master, the devil, with the help of a tar-barrel and a torch!"

"I intend to debate mysell to the Presbytery," said Steenie, "and tell them all I have seen last night, whilk are things fitter for them to judge of than a borrel man like me."

Sir John paused, composed himsell, and desired to hear the full history; and my gudesire told it him from point to point, as I have told it you—neither more nor less.

Sir John was silent again for a long time, and at last he said, very composedly: "Steenie, this story of yours concerns the honour of many a noble family besides mine; and if it be a leasing-making, to keep yourself out of my danger, the least you can expect is to have a red-hot iron driven through your tongue, and that will be as bad as scaulding your fingers wi' a red-hot chanter. But yet it may be true, Steenie; and if the money cast up, I shall not know what to think of it. But where shall we

find the Cat's Cradle? There are cats enough about the old house, but I think they kitten without the ceremony of bed or cradle."

"We were best ask Hutcheon," said my gudesire; "he kens a' the odd corners about as weel as—another serving-man that is now gane, and that I wad not like to name."

Aweel, Hutcheon, when he was asked, told them that a ruinous turret lang disused, next to the clock-house, only accessible by a ladder, for the opening was on the outside, above the battlements, was called of old the Cat's Cradle.

"There will I go immediately," said Sir John; and he took—with what purpose Heaven kens—one of his father's pistols from the hall table, where they had lain since the night he died, and hastened to the battlements.

It was a dangerous place to climb, for the ladder was auld and frail, and wanted ane or twa rounds. However, up got Sir John, and entered at the turret door, where his body stopped the only little light that was in the bit turret. Something flees at him wi' a vengeance, maist dang him back ower—bang! gaed the knight's pistol, and Hutcheon, that held the ladder, and my gudesire, that stood beside him, hears a loud skelloch. A minute after, Sir John flings the body of the jackanape down to them, and cries that the siller is fund, and that they should come up and help him. And there was the bag of siller sure aneugh, and mony orra thing besides, that had been missing for mony

a day. And Sir John, when he had riped the turret weel, led my gudesire into the dining-parlour, and took him by the hand, and spoke kindly to him, and said he was sorry he should have doubted his word, and that he would hereafter be a good master to him, to make amends.

"And now, Steenie," said Sir John, "although this vision of yours tends, on the whole, to my father's credit as an honest man, that he should, even after his death, desire to see justice done to a poor man like you, yet you are sensible that ill-dispositioned men might make bad constructions upon it concerning his soul's health. So, I think, we had better lay the haill dirdum on that ill-deedie creature, Major Weir, and say naething about your dream in the wood of Pitmurkie. You had taen ower-muckle brandy to be very certain about onything; and, Steenie, this receipt"—his hand shook while he held it out—"it 's but a queer kind of document, and we will do best, I think, to put it quietly in the fire."

"Od, but for as queer as it is, it 's a' the voucher I have for my rent," said my gudesire, who was afraid, it may be, of losing the benefit of Sir Robert's discharge.

"I will bear the contents to your credit in the rental-book, and give you a discharge under my own hand," said Sir John, "and that on the spot. And, Steenie, if you can hold your tongue about this matter, you shall sit, from this time downward, at an easier rent."

"Mony thanks to your honour," said Steenie, who saw easily in what corner the wind was; "doubtless I will be conformable to all your honour's commands; only I would willingly speak wi' some powerful minister on the subject, for I do not like the sort of soumons of appointment whilk your honour's father—"

"Do not call the phantom my father!" said Sir John, interrupting him.

"Well then, the thing that was so like him," said my gudesire; "he spoke of my coming back to see him this time twelvemonth, and it 's a weight on my conscience."

"Aweel then," said Sir John, "if you be so much distressed in mind, you may speak to our minister of the parish; he is a douce man, regards the honour of our family, and the mair that he may look for some patronage from me."

Wi' that, my father readily agreed that the receipt should be burnt; and the laird threw it into the chimney with his ain hand. Burn it would not for them, though; but away it flew up the lum, wi' a lang train of sparks at its tail, and a hissing noise like a squib.

My gudesire gaed down to the manse, and the minister, when he had heard the story, said it was his real opinion that, though my gudesire had gane very far in tampering with dangerous matters, yet as he had refused the devil's arles (for such was the offer of meat and drink), and had refused to do homage by piping at his bidding, he hoped that, if

he held a circumspect walk hereafter, Satan could take little advantage by what was come and gane. And, indeed, my gudesire, of his ain accord, lang forswore baith the pipes and the brandy—it was not even till the year was out, and the fatal day past, that he would so much as take the fiddle or drink usquebaugh or tippenny.

Sir John made up his story about the jackanape as he liked himsell; and some believe till this day there was no more in the matter than the filching nature of the brute. Indeed, ye 'll no hinder some to thread that it was nane o' the auld Enemy that Dougal and Hutcheon saw in the laird's room, but only that wanchancie creature the major, capering on the coffin; and that, as to the blawing on the laird's whistle that was heard after he was dead, the filthy brute could do that as weel as the laird himsell, if no better. But Heaven kens the truth, whilk first came out by the minister's wife, after Sir John and her ain gudeman were baith in the moulds. And then my gudesire, wha was failed in his limbs, but not in his judgment or memory,—at least nothing to speak of,—was obliged to tell the real narrative to his freends, for the credit of his good name. He might else have been charged for a warlock.[1]

[1] I have heard in my youth some such wild tale as that placed in the mouth of the blind fiddler, of which, I think, the hero was Sir Robert Grierson, of Lagg, the famous persecutor. But the belief was general throughout Scotland that the excessive lamentation over the loss of friends disturbed the repose of the dead, and broke even the rest of the grave.

The shades of evening were growing thicker around us as my conductor finished his long narrative with this moral: "You see, birkie, it is nae chancy thing to tak' a stranger traveller for a guide when you are in an uncouth land."

"I should not have made that inference," said I. "Your grandfather's adventure was fortunate for himself, whom it saved from ruin and distress; and fortunate for his landlord."

"Ay, but they had baith to sup the sauce o' 't sooner or later," said Wandering Willie; "what was fristed wasna forgiven. Sir John died before he was much over threescore; and it was just like of a moment's illness. And for my gudesire, though he departed in fulness of life, yet there was my father, a yauld man of forty-five, fell down betwixt the stilts of his plough, and rase never again, and left nae bairn but me, a puir, sightless, fatherless, motherless creature, could neither work nor want. Things gaed weel aneugh at first; for Sir Regwald Redgauntlet, the only son of Sir John and the oye of auld Sir Robert, and, wae 's me! the last of the honourable house, took the farm aff our hands, and brought me into his household to have care of me. My head never settled since I lost him; and if I say another word about it, deil a bar will I have the heart to play the night. Look out, my gentle chap," he resumed, in a different tone; "ye should see the lights at Brokenburn Glen by this time."

THE GLENMUTCHKIN RAILWAY

BY

PROFESSOR AYTOUN

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[The following tale appeared in "Blackwood's Magazine" for October, 1845. It was intended by the writer as a sketch of some of the more striking features of the railway mania (then in full progress throughout Great Britain), as exhibited in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Although bearing the appearance of a burlesque, it was in truth an accurate delineation (as will be acknowledged by many a gentleman who had the misfortune to be "out in the Forty-five"); and subsequent disclosures have shown that it was in no way exaggerated.

Although the "Glenmutchkin line" was purely imaginary, and not intended by the writer to apply to any particular scheme then before the public, it was identified in Scotland with more than one reckless and impracticable project; and even the characters introduced were supposed to be typical of personages who had attained some notoriety in the throng of speculation. Any such resemblances must be considered as fortuitous; for the writer cannot charge himself with the discourtesy of individual satire or allusion.]

I WAS confoundedly hard up. My patrimony, never of the largest, had been for the last year on the decrease,—a herald would have emblazoned it, "ARGENT, a money-bag improper, in detriment,"—and though the attenuating process was not excessively rapid, it was, nevertheless, proceed-

ing at a steady ratio. As for the ordinary means and appliances by which men contrive to recruit their exhausted exchequers, I knew none of them. Work I abhorred with a detestation worthy of a scion of nobility; and, I believe, you could just as soon have persuaded the lineal representative of the Howards or Percys to exhibit himself in the character of a mountebank, as have got me to trust my person on the pinnacle of a three-legged stool. The rule of three is all very well for base mechanical souls; but I flatter myself I have an intellect too large to be limited to a ledger. "Augustus," said my poor mother to me, while stroking my hyacinthine tresses, one fine morning, in the very dawn and budding-time of my existence—"Augustus, my dear boy, whatever you do, never forget that you are a gentleman." The maternal maxim sank deeply into my heart, and I never for a moment have forgotten it.

Notwithstanding this aristocratic resolution, the great practical question, "How am I to live?" began to thrust itself unpleasantly before me. I am one of that unfortunate class who have neither uncles nor aunts. For me, no yellow liverless individual, with characteristic bamboo and pigtail,—emblems of half a million,—returned to his native shores from Ceylon or remote Penang. For me, no venerable spinster hoarded in the Trongate, permitting herself few luxuries during a long-protracted life, save a lass and a lanthorn, a parrot, and the invariable baudrons of antiquity. No such

luck was mine. Had all Glasgow perished by some vast epidemic, I should not have found myself one farthing the richer. There would have been no golden balsam for me in the accumulated woes of Tradestown, Shettleston, and Camlachie. The time has been when—according to Washington Irving and other veracious historians—a young man had no sooner got into difficulties than a guardian angel appeared to him in a dream, with the information that at such and such a bridge, or under such and such a tree, he might find, at a slight expenditure of labour, a gallipot secured with bladder, and filled with glittering tomans; or, in the extremity of despair, the youth had only to append himself to a cord, and straightway the other end thereof, forsaking its staple in the roof, would disclose amid the fractured ceiling the glories of a profitable pose. These blessed days have long since gone by—at any rate, no such luck was mine. My guardian angel was either wofully ignorant of metallurgy, or the stores had been surreptitiously ransacked; and as to the other expedient, I frankly confess I should have liked some better security for its result than the precedent of the "Heir of Lynn."

It is a great consolation, amid all the evils of life, to know that, however bad your circumstances may be, there is always somebody else in nearly the same predicament. My chosen friend and ally, Bob M'Corkindale, was equally hard up with myself, and, if possible, more averse to exertion. Bob

was essentially a speculative man—that is, in a philosophical sense. He had once got hold of a stray volume of Adam Smith, and muddled his brains for a whole week over the intricacies of the "Wealth of Nations." The result was a crude farrago of notions regarding the true nature of money, the soundness of currency, and relative value of capital, with which he nightly favoured an admiring audience at "The Crow"; for Bob was by no means—in the literal acceptation of the word—a dry philosopher. On the contrary, he perfectly appreciated the merits of each distinct distillery, and was understood to be the compiler of a statistical work entitled "A Tour through the Alcoholic Districts of Scotland." It had very early occurred to me, who knew as much of political economy as of the bagpipes, that a gentleman so well versed in the art of accumulating national wealth must have some remote ideas of applying his principles profitably on a smaller scale. Accordingly I gave M'Corkindale an unlimited invitation to my lodgings; and, like a good hearty fellow as he was, he availed himself every evening of the license; for I had laid in a fourteen-gallon cask of Oban whisky, and the quality of the malt was undeniable.

These were the first glorious days of general speculation. Railroads were emerging from the hands of the greater into the fingers of the lesser capitalists. Two successful harvests had given a fearful stimulus to the national energy; and it ap-

peared perfectly certain that all the populous towns would be united, and the rich agricultural districts intersected, by the magical bands of iron. The columns of the newspapers teemed every week with the parturition of novel schemes; and the shares were no sooner announced than they were rapidly subscribed for. But what is the use of my saying anything more about the history of last year? Every one of us remembers it perfectly well. It was a capital year on the whole, and put money into many a pocket. About that time, Bob and I commenced operations. Our available capital, or negotiable bullion, in the language of my friend, amounted to about three hundred pounds, which we set aside as a joint fund for speculation. Bob, in a series of learned discourses, had convinced me that it was not only folly, but a positive sin, to leave this sum lying in the bank at a pitiful rate of interest, and otherwise unemployed, while every one else in the kingdom was having a pluck at the public pigeon. Somehow or other, we were unlucky in our first attempts. Speculators are like wasps; for when they have once got hold of a ripening and peach-like project, they keep it rigidly for their own swarm, and repel the approach of interlopers. Notwithstanding all our efforts, and very ingenious ones they were, we never, in a single instance, succeeded in procuring an allocation of original shares; and though we did now and then make a hit by purchase, we more frequently bought at a premium, and parted with our scrip at

a discount. At the end of six months we were not twenty pounds richer than before.

"This will never do," said Bob, as he sat one evening in my rooms compounding his second tumbler. "I thought we were living in an enlightened age; but I find I was mistaken. That brutal spirit of monopoly is still abroad and uncurbed. The principles of free trade are utterly forgotten, or misunderstood. Else how comes it that David Spreul received but yesterday an allocation of two hundred shares in the Westermidden Junction, while your application and mine, for a thousand each, were overlooked? Is this a state of things to be tolerated? Why should he, with his fifty thousand pounds, receive a slapping premium, while our three hundred of available capital remains unrepresented? The fact is monstrous, and demands the immediate and serious interference of the legislature."

"It is a burning shame," said I, fully alive to the manifold advantages of a premium.

"I 'll tell you what, Dunshunner," rejoined M'Corkindale, "it 's no use going on in this way. We have n't shown half pluck enough. These fellows consider us as snobs because we don't take the bull by the horns. Now 's the time for a bold stroke. The public are quite ready to subscribe for anything—and we 'll start a railway for ourselves."

"Start a railway with three hundred pounds of capital!"

"Pshaw, man! you don't know what you 're

talking about—we 've a great deal more capital than that. Have not I told you, seventy times over, that everything a man has—his coat, his hat, the tumblers he drinks from, nay, his very corporeal existence—is absolute marketable capital? What do you call that fourteen-gallon cask, I should like to know?"

"A compound of hoops and staves, containing about a quart and a half of spirits—you have effectually accounted for the rest."

"Then it has gone to the fund of profit and loss, that 's all. Never let me hear you sport those old theories again. Capital is indestructible, as I am ready to prove to you any day, in half an hour. But let us sit down seriously to business. We are rich enough to pay for the advertisements, and that is all we need care for in the meantime. The public is sure to step in, and bear us out handsomely with the rest."

"But where in the face of the habitable globe shall the railway be? England is out of the question, and I hardly know a spot in the Lowlands that is not occupied already."

"What do you say to a Spanish scheme—the Alcantara Union? Hang me if I know whether Alcantara is in Spain or Portugal; but nobody else does, and the one is quite as good as the other. Or what would you think of the Palermo Railway, with a branch to the sulphur-mines?—that would be popular in the north—or the Pyrenees Direct? They would all go to a premium."

"I must confess I should prefer a line at home."

"Well then, why not try the Highlands? There must be lots of traffic there in the shape of sheep, grouse, and Cockney tourists, not to mention salmon and other etceteras. Could n't we tip them a railway somewhere in the west?"

"There 's Glenmutchkin, for instance—"

"Capital, my dear fellow! Glorious! By Jove, first-rate!" shouted Bob, in an ecstasy of delight. "There 's a distillery there, you know, and a fishing-village at the foot—at least, there used to be six years ago, when I was living with the exciseman. There may be some bother about the population, though. The last laird shipped every mother's son of the aboriginal Celts to America; but, after all, that 's not of much consequence. I see the whole thing! Unrivalled scenery—stupendous waterfalls—herds of black cattle—spot where Prince Charles Edward met Macgrugar of Glengrugar and his clan! We could not possibly have lighted on a more promising place. Hand us over that sheet of paper, like a good fellow, and a pen. There is no time to be lost, and the sooner we get out the prospectus the better."

"But, Heaven bless you, Bob, there 's a great deal to be thought of first. Who are we to get for a provisional committee?"

"That 's very true," said Bob, musingly. "We *must* treat them to some respectable names, that is, good-sounding ones. I 'm afraid there is little chance of our producing a peer to begin with?"

"None whatever—unless we could invent one,

and that 's hardly safe; 'Burke's Peerage' has gone through too many editions. Could n't we try the Dormants?"

"That would be rather dangerous in the teeth of the standing orders. But what do you say to a baronet? There 's Sir Polloxfen Tremens. He got himself served the other day to a Nova Scotia baronetcy, with just as much title as you or I have; and he has sported the riband, and dined out on the strength of it ever since. He 'll join us at once, for he has not a sixpence to lose."

"Down with him, then," and we headed the provisional list with the pseudo Orange tawny.

"Now," said Bob, "it 's quite indispensable, as this is a Highland line, that we should put forward a chief or two. That has always a great effect upon the English, whose feudal notions are rather of the mistiest, and principally derived from Waverley."

"Why not write yourself down as the laird of M'Corkindale?" said I. "I dare say you would not be negatived by a counter-claim."

"That would hardly do," replied Bob, "as I intend to be secretary. After all, what 's the use of thinking about it? Here goes for an extempore chief;" and the villain wrote down the name of Tavish M'Tavish of Invertavish.

"I say, though," said I, "we must have a real Highlander on the list. If we go on this way, it will become a justiciary matter."

"You 're devilish scrupulous, Gus," said Bob, who, if left to himself, would have stuck in the

names of the heathen gods and goddesses, or borrowed his directors from the Ossianic chronicles, rather than have delayed the prospectus. "Where the mischief are we to find the men? I can think of no others likely to go the whole hog; can you?"

"I don't know a single Celt in Glasgow except old M'Closkie, the drunken porter at the corner of Jamaica Street."

"He 's the very man! I suppose, after the manner of his tribe, he will do anything for a pint of whisky. But what shall we call him? Jamaica Street, I fear, will hardly do for a designation."

"Call him THE M'CLOSKIE. It will be sonorous in the ears of the Saxon!"

"Bravo!" and another chief was added to the roll of the clans.

"Now," said Bob, "we must put you down. Recollect, all the management, that is, the allocation, will be intrusted to you. Augustus—you have n't a middle name, I think?—well then, suppose we interpolate 'Reginald'; it has a smack of the crusades. Augustus Reginald Dunshunner, Esq. of—where, in the name of Munchausen!"

"I 'm sure I don't know. I never had any land beyond the contents of a flower-pot. Stay—I rather think I have a superiority somewhere about Paisley."

"Just the thing!" cried Bob. "It 's heritable property, and therefore titular. What 's the denomination?"

"St. Mirrens."

"Beautiful! Dunshunner of St. Mirrens, I give you joy! Had you discovered that a little sooner —and I wonder you did not think of it—we might both of us have had lots of allocations. These are not the times to conceal hereditary distinctions. But now comes the serious work. We must have one or two men of known wealth upon the list. The chaff is nothing without a decoy-bird. Now, can't you help me with a name?"

"In that case," said I, "the game is up, and the whole scheme exploded. I would as soon undertake to evoke the ghost of Crœsus."

"Dunshunner," said Bob, very seriously, "to be a man of information, you are possessed of marvellous few resources. I am quite ashamed of you. Now listen to me. I have thought deeply upon this subject, and am quite convinced that, with some little trouble, we may secure the coöperation of a most wealthy and influential body—one, too, that is generally supposed to have stood aloof from all speculation of the kind, and whose name would be a tower of strength in the moneyed quarters. I allude," continued Bob, reaching across for the kettle, "to the great dissenting interest."

"The what?" cried I, aghast.

"The great dissenting interest. You can't have failed to observe the row they have lately been making about Sunday travelling and education. Old Sam Sawley, the coffin-maker, is their principal spokesman here; and wherever he goes the

rest will follow, like a flock of sheep bounding after a patriarchal ram. I propose, therefore, to wait upon him to-morrow, and request his coöperation in a scheme which is not only to prove profitable, but to make head against the lax principles of the present age. Leave me alone to tickle him. I consider his name, and those of one or two others belonging to the same meeting-house, —fellows with bank-stock and all sorts of tin,—as perfectly secure. These dissenters smell a premium from an almost incredible distance. We can fill up the rest of the committee with ciphers, and the whole thing is done."

"But the engineer—we must announce such an officer as a matter of course."

"I never thought of that," said Bob. "Could n't we hire a fellow from one of the steamboats?"

"I fear that might get us into trouble. You know there are such things as gradients and sections to be prepared. But there 's Watty Solder, the gas-fitter, who failed the other day. He 's a sort of civil engineer by trade, and will jump at the proposal like a trout at the tail of a May-fly."

"Agreed. Now then, let 's fix the number of shares. This is our first experiment, and I think we ought to be moderate. No sound political economist is avaricious. Let us say twelve thousand, at twenty pounds apiece."

"So be it."

"Well then, that 's arranged. I 'll see Sawley and the rest to-morrow, settle with Solder, and

then write out the prospectus. You look in upon me in the evening, and we 'll revise it together. Now, by your leave, let 's have in the Welsh rabbit and another tumbler to drink success and prosperity to the Glenmutchkin Railway."

I confess that, when I rose on the morrow, with a slight headache and a tongue indifferently parched, I recalled to memory, not without perturbation of conscience and some internal qualms, the conversation of the previous evening. I felt relieved, however, after two spoonfuls of carbonate of soda, and a glance at the newspaper, wherein I perceived the announcement of no less than four other schemes equally preposterous with our own. But, after all, what right had I to assume that the Glenmutchkin project would prove an ultimate failure? I had not a scrap of statistical information that might entitle me to form such an opinion. At any rate, Parliament, by substituting the Board of Trade as an initiating body of inquiry, had created a responsible tribunal, and freed us from the chance of obloquy. I saw before me a vision of six months' steady gambling, at manifest advantage, in the shares, before a report could possibly be pronounced, or our proceedings be in any way overhauled. Of course I attended that evening punctually at my friend M'Corkindale's. Bob was in high feather; for Sawley no sooner heard of the principles upon which the railway was to be conducted, and his own nomination as a director, than he gave in his adhesion, and promised his

unflinching support to the uttermost. The prospectus ran as follows:

"DIRECT GLENMUTCHKIN RAILWAY.

IN 12,000 SHARES OF £20 EACH. DEPOSIT £1 PER SHARE.

Provisional Committee.

SIR POLLOXFEN TREMENS, Bart. of Toddymains.
TAVISH M'TAVISH of Invertavish.
THE M'CLOSKIE.
AUGUSTUS REGINALD DUNSHUNNER, Esq. of St. Mirrens.
SAMUEL SAWLEY, Esq., Merchant.
MHIC-MHAC-VICH-INDUIBH.
PHELIM O'FINLAN, Esq. of Castle-rook, Ireland.
THE CAPTAIN of M'ALCOHOL.
FACTOR for GLENTUMBLERS.
JOHN JOB JOBSON, Esq., Manufacturer.
EVAN M'CLAW of Glenscart and Inveryewky.
JOSEPH HECKLES, Esq.
HABAKKUK GRABBIE, Portioner in Ramoth-Drumclog.

Engineer, WALTER SOLDER, Esq.
Interim Secretary, ROBERT M'CORKINDALE, Esq.

"The necessity of a direct line of Railway communication through the fertile and populous district known as the VALLEY of GLENMUTCHKIN has been long felt and universally acknowledged. Independently of the surpassing grandeur of its mountain scenery, which shall immediately be referred to, and other considerations of even greater importance, GLENMUTCHKIN is known to the capitalist as the

most important BREEDING-STATION in the Highlands of Scotland, and indeed as the great emporium from which the southern market; are supplied. It has been calculated by a most eminent authority that every acre in the strath is capable of rearing twenty head of cattle; and as it has been ascertained, after a careful admeasurement, that there are not less than TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND improvable acres immediately contiguous to the proposed line of Railway, it may confidently be assumed that the number of Cattle to be conveyed along the line will amount to FOUR MILLIONS annually, which, at the lowest estimate, would yield a revenue larger, in proportion to the capital subscribed, than that of any Railway as yet completed within the United Kingdom. From this estimate the traffic in Sheep and Goats, with which the mountains are literally covered, has been carefully excluded, it having been found quite impossible (from its extent) to compute the actual revenue to be drawn from that most important branch. It may, however, be roughly assumed as from seventeen to nineteen per cent. upon the whole, after deduction of the working expenses.

"The population of Glenmutchkin is extremely dense. Its situation on the west coast has afforded it the means of direct communication with America, of which for many years the inhabitants have actively availed themselves. Indeed, the amount of exportation of live stock from this part of the

Highlands to the Western continent has more than once attracted the attention of Parliament. The Manufactures are large and comprehensive, and include the most famous distilleries in the world. The Minerals are most abundant, and among these may be reckoned quartz, porphyry, felspar, malachite, manganese, and basalt.

"At the foot of the valley, and close to the sea, lies the important village known as the CLACHAN of INVERSTARVE. It is supposed by various eminent antiquaries to have been the capital of the Picts, and, among the busy inroads of commercial prosperity, it still retains some interesting traces of its former grandeur. There is a large fishing-station here, to which vessels from every nation resort, and the demand for foreign produce is daily and steadily increasing.

"As a sporting country Glenmutchkin is unrivalled; but it is by the tourists that its beauties will most greedily be sought. These consist of every combination which plastic nature can afford: cliffs of unusual magnitude and grandeur; waterfalls only second to the sublime cascades of Norway; woods of which the bark is a remarkably valuable commodity. It need scarcely be added, to rouse the enthusiasm inseparable from this glorious glen, that here, in 1745, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, then in the zenith of his hopes, was joined by the brave Sir Grugar M'Grugar at the head of his devoted clan.

"The Railway will be twelve miles long, and can

be completed within six months after the Act of Parliament is obtained. The gradients are easy, and the curves obtuse. There are no viaducts of any importance, and only four tunnels along the whole length of the line. The shortest of these does not exceed a mile and a half.

"In conclusion, the projectors of this Railway beg to state that they have determined, as a principle, to set their face AGAINST ALL SUNDAY TRAVELLING WHATSOEVER, and to oppose EVERY BILL which may hereafter be brought into Parliament, unless it shall contain a clause to that effect. It is also their intention to take up the cause of the poor and neglected STOKER, for whose accommodation, and social, moral, religious, and intellectual improvement, a large stock of evangelical tracts will speedily be required. Tenders of these, in quantities of not less than 12,000, may be sent in to the Interim Secretary. Shares must be applied for within ten days from the present date.

"By order of the Provisional Committee,
"ROBERT M'CORKINDALE, *Secretary*."

"There!" said Bob, slapping down the prospectus on the table with as much triumph as if it had been the original of Magna Charta, "what do you think of that? If it does n't do the business effectually, I shall submit to be called a Dutchman. That last touch about the stoker will bring us in the subscriptions of the old ladies by the score."

"Very masterly indeed," said I. "But who the deuce is Mhic-Mhac-vich-Induibh?"

"A bona-fide chief, I assure you, though a little reduced. I picked him up upon the Broomielaw. His grandfather had an island somewhere to the west of the Hebrides; but it is not laid down in the maps."

"And the Captain of M'Alcohol?"

"A crack distiller."

"And the Factor for Glentumblers?"

"His principal customer. But, bless you, my dear St. Mirrens! don't bother yourself any more about the committee. They are as respectable a set—on paper at least—as you would wish to see of a summer's morning, and the beauty of it is that they will give us no manner of trouble. Now about the allocation. You and I must restrict ourselves to a couple of thousand shares apiece. That 's only a third of the whole, but it won't do to be greedy."

"But, Bob, consider! where on earth are we to find the money to pay up the deposits?"

"Can you, the principal director of the Glenmutchkin Railway, ask me, the secretary, such a question? Don't you know that any of the banks will give us tick to the amount 'of half the deposits.' All that is settled already, and you can get your two thousand pounds whenever you please merely for the signing of a bill. Sawley must get a thousand according to stipulation; Jobson, Heckles, and Grabbie, at least five hundred

apiece; and another five hundred, I should think, will exhaust the remaining means of the committee. So that, out of our whole stock, there remain just five thousand shares to be allocated to the speculative and evangelical public. My eyes! won't there be a scramble for them!"

Next day our prospectus appeared in the newspapers. It was read, canvassed, and generally approved of. During the afternoon I took an opportunity of looking into the Tontine, and, while under shelter of the Glasgow "Herald," my ears were solaced with such ejaculations as the following:

"I say, Jimsy, hae ye seen this grand new prospectus for a railway tae Glenmutchkin?"

"Ay. It looks no that ill. The Hieland lairds are pitting their best fit foremost. Will ye apply for shares?"

"I think I 'll tak' twa hundred. Wha 's Sir Polloxfen Tremens?"

"He 'll be yin o' the Ayrshire folk. He used to rin horses at the Paisley races."

("The devil he did!" thought I.)

"D' ye ken ony o' the directors, Jimsy?"

"I ken Sawley fine. Ye may depend on 't, it 's a gude thing if he 's in 't, for he 's a howkin' body."

"Then it 's sure to gae up. What prem. d' ye think it will bring?"

"Twa pund a share, and maybe mair."

"'Od, I 'll apply for three hundred!"

"Heaven bless you, my dear countrymen!" thought I, as I sallied forth to refresh myself with a basin of soup, "do but maintain this liberal and patriotic feeling—this thirst for national improvement, internal communication, and premiums—a short while longer, and I know whose fortune will be made."

On the following morning my breakfast-table was covered with shoals of letters, from fellows whom I scarcely ever had spoken to,—or who, to use a franker phraseology, had scarcely ever condescended to speak to me,—entreating my influence as a director to obtain them shares in the new undertaking. I never bore malice in my life, so I chalked them down, without favouritism, for a certain proportion. While engaged in this charitable work, the door flew open, and M'Corkindale, looking utterly haggard with excitement, rushed in.

"You may buy an estate whenever you please, Dunshunner," cried he; "the world's gone perfectly mad! I have been to Blazes, the broker, and he tells me that the whole amount of the stock has been subscribed for four times over already, and he has not yet got in the returns from Edinburgh and Liverpool!"

"Are they good names, though, Bob—sure cards—none of your M'Closkies and M'Alcohols?"

"The first names in the city, I assure you, and most of them holders for investment. I would n't take ten millions for their capital."

"Then the sooner we close the list the better."

"I think so too. I suspect a rival company will be out before long. Blazes says the shares are selling already conditionally on allotment, at seven and sixpence premium."

"The deuce they are! I say, Bob, since we have the cards in our hands, would it not be wise to favour them with a few hundreds at that rate? A bird in the hand, you know, is worth two in the bush, eh?"

"I know no such maxim in political economy," replied the secretary. "Are you mad, Dunshunner? How are the shares ever to go up, if it gets wind that the directors are selling already? Our business just now is to *bull* the line, not to *bear* it; and if you will trust me, I shall show them such an operation on the ascending scale as the Stock Exchange has not witnessed for this long and many a day. Then to-morrow I shall advertise in the papers that the committee, having received applications for ten times the amount of stock, have been compelled, unwillingly, to close the lists. That will be a slap in the face to the dilatory gentlemen, and send up the shares like wildfire."

Bob was right. No sooner did the advertisement appear than a simultaneous groan was uttered by some hundreds of disappointed speculators, who, with unwonted and unnecessary caution, had been anxious to see their way a little before committing themselves to our splendid enterprise. In consequence, they rushed into the market, with intense

anxiety to make what terms they could at the earliest stage, and the seven and sixpence of premium was doubled in the course of a forenoon.

The allocation passed over very peaceably. Sawley, Heckles, Jobson, Grabbie, and the Captain of M'Alcohol, besides myself, attended, and took part in the business. We were also threatened with the presence of the M'Closkie and Vich-Induibh; but M'Corkindale, entertaining some reasonable doubts as to the effect which their corporeal appearance might have upon the representatives of the dissenting interest, had taken the precaution to get them snugly housed in a tavern, where an unbounded supply of gratuitous Ferintosh deprived us of the benefit of their experience. We, however, allotted them twenty shares apiece. Sir Polloxfen Tremens sent a handsome, though rather illegible, letter of apology, dated from an island in Loch Lomond, where he was said to be detained on particular business.

Mr. Sawley, who officiated as our chairman, was kind enough, before parting, to pass a very flattering eulogium upon the excellence and candour of all the preliminary arrangements. It would now, he said, go forth to the public that this line was not, like some others he could mention, a mere bubble, emanating from the stank of private interest, but a solid, lasting superstructure, based upon the principles of sound return for capital, and serious evangelical truth (hear, hear!). The time was fast approaching when the grave-

stone with the words "HIC OBIIT" chiselled upon it would be placed at the head of all the other lines which rejected the grand opportunity of conveying education to the stoker. The stoker, in his (Mr. Sawley's) opinion, had a right to ask the all-important question, "Am I not a man and a brother?" (Cheers.) Much had been said and written lately about a work called "Tracts for the Times." With the opinions contained in that publication he was not conversant, as it was conducted by persons of another community from that to which he (Mr. Sawley) had the privilege to belong. But he hoped very soon, under the auspices of the Glenmutchkin Railway Company, to see a new periodical established, under the title of "Tracts for the Trains." He never for a moment would relax his efforts to knock a nail into the coffin which, he might say, was already made and measured and cloth-covered for the reception of all establishments; and with these sentiments, and the conviction that the shares must rise, could it be doubted that he would remain a fast friend to the interests of this company for ever? (Much cheering.)

After having delivered this address, Mr. Sawley affectionately squeezed the hands of his brother directors, and departed, leaving several of us much overcome. As, however, M'Corkindale had told me that every one of Sawley's shares had been disposed of in the market the day before, I felt less compunction at having refused to allow that ex-

cellent man an extra thousand beyond the amount he had applied for, notwithstanding his broadest hints and even private entreaties.

"Confound the greedy hypocrite!" said Bob; "does he think we shall let him burke the line for nothing? No—no! let him go to the brokers and buy his shares back, if he thinks they are likely to rise. I 'll be bound he has made a cool five hundred out of them already."

On the day which succeeded the allocation, the following entry appeared in the Glasgow share-lists: "Direct Glenmutchkin Railway 15s. 15s. 6d. 15s. 6d. 16s. 15s. 6d. 16s. 16s. 6d. 16s. 6d. 16s. 17s. 18s. 18s. 19s. 6d. 21s. 21s. 22s. 6d. 24s. 25s. 6d. 27s. 29s. 29s. 6d. 30s. 31s. pm."

"They might go higher, and they ought to go higher," said Bob, musingly; "but there 's not much more stock to come and go upon, and these two share-sharks, Jobson and Grabbie, I know, will be in the market to-morrow. We must not let them have the whip-hand of us. I think upon the whole, Dunshunner, though it 's letting them go dog-cheap, that we ought to sell half our shares at the present premium, while there is a certainty of getting it."

"Why not sell the whole? I 'm sure I have no objections to part with every stiver of the scrip on such terms."

"Perhaps," said Bob, "upon general principles you may be right; but then remember that we have a vested interest in the line."

"Vested interest be hanged!"

"That 's very well; at the same time it is no use to kill your salmon in a hurry. The bulls have done their work pretty well for us, and we ought to keep something on hand for the bears; they are snuffing at it already. I could almost swear that some of those fellows who have sold to-day are working for a time-bargain."

We accordingly got rid of a couple of thousand shares, the proceeds of which not only enabled us to discharge the deposit loan, but left us a material surplus. Under these circumstances a two-handed banquet was proposed and unanimously carried, the commencement of which I distinctly remember, but am rather dubious as to the end. So many stories have lately been circulated to the prejudice of railway directors that I think it my duty to state that this entertainment was scrupulously defrayed by ourselves, and *not* carried to account, either of the preliminary survey, or the expenses of the provisional committee.

Nothing effects so great a metamorphosis in the bearing of the outer man as a sudden change of fortune. The anemone of the garden differs scarcely more from its unpretending prototype of the woods than Robert M'Corkindale, Esq., Secretary and Projector of the Glenmutchkin Railway, differed from Bob M'Corkindale, the seedy frequenter of "The Crow." In the days of yore, men eyed the surtout—napless at the velvet collar, and preternaturally white at the seams—

which Bob vouchsafed to wear with looks of dim suspicion, as if some faint reminiscence, similar to that which is said to recall the memory of a former state of existence, suggested to them a notion that the garment had once been their own. Indeed, his whole appearance was then wonderfully second-hand. Now he had cast his slough. A most undeniable taglioni, with trimmings just bordering upon frogs, gave dignity to his demeanour and twofold amplitude to his chest. The horn eye-glass was exchanged for one of purest gold, the dingy high-lows for well-waxed Wellingtons, the Paisley fogle for the fabric of the China loom. Moreover, he walked with a swagger, and affected in common conversation a peculiar dialect which he opined to be the purest English, but which no one—except a bagman—could be reasonably expected to understand. His pockets were invariably crammed with share-lists; and he quoted, if he did not comprehend, the money article from the "Times." This sort of assumption, though very ludicrous in itself, goes down wonderfully. Bob gradually became a sort of authority, and his opinions got quoted on 'Change. He was no ass, notwithstanding his peculiarities, and made good use of his opportunity.

For myself, I bore my new dignities with an air of modest meekness. A certain degree of starchness is indispensable for a railway director, if he means to go forward in his high calling and prosper; he must abandon all juvenile eccentricities,

and aim at the appearance of a decided enemy to free trade in the article of Wild Oats. Accordingly, as the first step toward respectability, I eschewed coloured waistcoats and gave out that I was a marrying man. No man under forty, unless he is a positive idiot, will stand forth as a theoretical bachelor. It is all nonsense to say that there is anything unpleasant in being courted. Attention, whether from male or female, tickles the vanity; and although I have a reasonable, and, I hope, not unwholesome regard for the gratification of my other appetites, I confess that this same vanity is by far the most poignant of the whole. I therefore surrendered myself freely to the soft allurements thrown in my way by such matronly denizens of Glasgow as were possessed of stock in the shape of marriageable daughters; and walked the more readily into their toils because every party, though nominally for the purposes of tea, wound up with a hot supper, and something hotter still by way of assisting the digestion.

I don't know whether it was my determined conduct at the allocation, my territorial title, or a most exaggerated idea of my circumstances, that worked upon the mind of Mr. Sawley. Possibly it was a combination of the three; but, sure enough, few days had elapsed before I received a formal card of invitation to a tea and serious conversation. Now serious conversation is a sort of thing that I never shone in, possibly because my early studies were framed in a different direction; but

as I really was unwilling to offend the respectable coffin-maker, and as I found that the Captain of M'Alcohol—a decided trump in his way—had also received a summons, I notified my acceptance.

M'Alcohol and I went together. The captain, an enormous brawny Celt, with superhuman whiskers and a shock of the fieriest hair, had figged himself out, *more majorum*, in the full Highland costume. I never saw Rob Roy on the stage look half so dignified or ferocious. He glittered from head to foot with dirk, pistol, and skean-dhu; and at least a hundredweight of cairngorms cast a prismatic glory around his person. I felt quite abashed beside him.

We were ushered into Mr. Sawley's drawing-room. Round the walls, and at considerable distances from each other, were seated about a dozen characters, male and female, all of them dressed in sable, and wearing countenances of woe. Sawley advanced, and wrung me by the hand with so piteous an expression of visage that I could not help thinking some awful catastrophe had just befallen his family.

"You are welcome, Mr. Dunshunner—welcome to my humble tabernacle. Let me present you to Mrs. Sawley"—and a lady, who seemed to have bathed in the Yellow Sea, rose from her seat, and favoured me with a profound curtsey.

"My daughter—Miss Selina Sawley."

I felt in my brain the scorching glance of the two darkest eyes it ever was my fortune to behold,

as the beauteous Selina looked up from the perusal of her handkerchief hem. It was a pity that the other features were not corresponding; for the nose was flat, and the mouth of such dimensions that a harlequin might have jumped down it with impunity; but the eyes *were* splendid.

In obedience to a sign from the hostess, I sank into a chair beside Selina; and, not knowing exactly what to say, hazarded some observation about the weather.

"Yes, it is indeed a suggestive season. How deeply, Mr. Dunshunner, we ought to feel the pensive progress of autumn toward a soft and premature decay! I always think, about this time of the year, that nature is falling into a consumption!"

"To be sure, ma'am," said I, rather taken aback by this style of colloquy, "the trees are looking devilishly hectic."

"Ah, you have remarked that too! Strange! it was but yesterday that I was wandering through Kelvin Grove, and as the phantom breeze brought down the withered foliage from the spray, I thought how probable it was that they might ere long rustle over young and glowing hearts deposited prematurely in the tomb!"

This, which struck me as a very passable imitation of Dickens's pathetic writings, was a poser. In default of language, I looked Miss Sawley straight in the face, and attempted a substitute for a sigh. I was rewarded with a tender glance.

"Ah," said she, "I see you are a congenial spirit! How delightful, and yet how rare, it is to meet with any one who thinks in unison with yourself! Do you ever walk in the Necropolis, Mr. Dunshunner? It is my favourite haunt of a morning. There we can wean ourselves, as it were, from life, and, beneath the melancholy yew and cypress, anticipate the setting star. How often there have I seen the procession—the funeral of some very, *very* little child—"

"Selina, my love," said Mrs. Sawley, "have the kindness to ring for the cookies."

I, as in duty bound, started up to save the fair enthusiast the trouble, and was not sorry to observe my seat immediately occupied by a very cadaverous gentleman, who was evidently jealous of the progress I was rapidly making. Sawley, with an air of great mystery, informed me that this was a Mr. Dalgleish of Raxmathrapple, the representative of an ancient Scottish family who claimed an important heritable office. The name, I thought, was familiar to me, but there was something in the appearance of Mr. Dalgleish which, notwithstanding the smiles of Miss Selina, rendered a rivalship in that quarter utterly out of the question.

I hate injustice, so let me do due honour in description to the Sawley banquet. The tea-urn most literally corresponded to its name. The table was decked out with divers platters, containing seed-cakes cut into rhomboids, almond biscuits, and ratafia-drops. Also on the sideboard there

were two salvers, each of which contained a congregation of glasses, filled with port and sherry. The former fluid, as I afterward ascertained, was of the kind advertised as "curious," and proffered for sale at the reasonable rate of sixteen shillings per dozen. The banquet, on the whole, was rather peculiar than enticing; and, for the life of me, I could not divest myself of the idea that the self-same viands had figured, not long before, as funeral refreshments at a dirgie. No such suspicion seemed to cross the mind of M'Alcohol, who hitherto had remained uneasily surveying his nails in a corner, but at the first symptom of food started forward, and was in the act of making a clean sweep of the china, when Sawley proposed the singular preliminary of a hymn.

The hymn was accordingly sung. I am thankful to say it was such a one as I never heard before, or expect to hear again; and unless it was composed by the Reverend Saunders Peden in an hour of paroxysm on the moors, I cannot conjecture the author. After this original symphony, tea was discussed, and after tea, to my amazement, more hot brandy-and-water than I ever remember to have seen circulated at the most convivial party. Of course this effected a radical change in the spirits and conversation of the circle. It was again my lot to be placed by the side of the fascinating Selina, whose sentimentality gradually thawed away beneath the influence of sundry sips, which she accepted with a delicate reluctance. This

time Dalgleish of Raxmathrapple had not the remotest chance. M'Alcohol got furious, sang Gaelic songs, and even delivered a sermon in genuine Erse, without incurring a rebuke; while, for my own part, I must needs confess that I waxed unnecessarily amorous, and the last thing I recollect was the pressure of Mr. Sawley's hand at the door, as he denominated me his dear boy, and hoped I would soon come back and visit Mrs. Sawley and Selina. The recollection of these passages next morning was the surest antidote to my return.

Three weeks had elapsed, and still the Glenmutchkin Railway shares were at a premium, though rather lower than when we sold. Our engineer, Watty Solder, returned from his first survey of the line, along with an assistant who really appeared to have some remote glimmerings of the science and practice of mensuration. It seemed, from a verbal report, that the line was actually practicable; and the survey would have been completed in a very short time, "if," according to the account of Solder, "there had been nae hoos in the glen. But ever sin' the distillery stoppit—and that was twa year last Martinmas—there wasna a hole whaur a Christian could lay his head, muckle less get white sugar to his toddy, forby the change-house at the clachan; and the auld lucky that keepit it was sair forfochten wi' the palsy, and maist in the dead-thraws. There was naebody else living within twal' miles o' the line, barring a taxman, a lamiter, and a bauldie."

We had some difficulty in preventing Mr. Solder from making this report open and patent to the public, which premature disclosure might have interfered materially with the preparation of our traffic tables, not to mention the marketable value of the shares. We therefore kept him steadily at work out of Glasgow, upon a very liberal allowance, to which, apparently, he did not object.

"Dunshunner," said M'Corkindale to me one day, "I suspect that there is something going on about our railway more than we are aware of. Have you observed that the shares are preternaturally high just now?"

"So much the better. Let 's sell."

"I did so this morning, both yours and mine, at two pounds ten shillings premium."

"The deuce you did! Then we 're out of the whole concern."

"Not quite. If my suspicions are correct, there 's a good deal more money yet to be got from the speculation. Somebody has been bulling the stock without orders; and, as they can have no information which we are not perfectly up to, depend upon it, it is done for a purpose. I suspect Sawley and his friends. They have never been quite happy since the allocation; and I caught him yesterday pumping our broker in the back shop. We 'll see in a day or two. If they are beginning a bearing operation, I know how to catch them."

And, in effect, the bearing operation commenced. Next day, heavy sales were effected for delivery in three weeks; and the stock, as if water-

logged, began to sink. The same thing continued for the following two days, until the premium became nearly nominal. In the meantime, Bob and I, in conjunction with two leading capitalists whom we let into the secret, bought up steadily every share that was offered; and at the end of a fortnight we found that we had purchased rather more than double the amount of the whole original stock. Sawley and his disciples, who, as M'Corkindale suspected, were at the bottom of the whole transaction, having beared to their hearts' content, now came into the market to purchase, in order to redeem their engagements. The following extracts from the weekly share-lists will show the result of their endeavours to regain their lost position:

		Sat.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
GLENMUTCHKIN RAILWAY,	£1 paid,	1⅛	2¼	4⅜	7½	10⅝	15⅝	17,

and Monday was the day of delivery.

I have no means of knowing in what frame of mind Mr. Sawley spent the Sunday, or whether he had recourse for mental consolation to Peden; but on Monday morning he presented himself at my door in full funeral costume, with about a quarter of a mile of crape swathed round his hat, black gloves, and a countenance infinitely more doleful than if he had been attending the interment of his beloved wife.

"Walk in, Mr. Sawley," said I, cheerfully. "What a long time it is since I have had the pleasure of seeing you—too long indeed for brother

directors! How are Mrs. Sawley and Miss Selina? Won't you take a cup of coffee?"

"Grass, sir, grass!" said Mr. Sawley, with a sigh like the groan of a furnace-bellows. "We are all flowers of the oven—weak, erring creatures, every one of us. Ah, Mr. Dunshunner, you have been a great stranger at Lykewake Terrace!"

"Take a muffin, Mr. Sawley. Anything new in the railway world?"

"Ah, my dear sir,—my good Mr. Augustus Reginald,—I wanted to have some serious conversation with you on that very point. I am afraid there is something far wrong indeed in the present state of our stock."

"Why, to be sure it is high; but that, you know, is a token of the public confidence in the line. After all, the rise is nothing compared to that of several English railways; and individually, I suppose, neither of us has any reason to complain."

"I don't like it," said Sawley, watching me over the margin of his coffee-cup; "I don't like it. It savours too much of gambling for a man of my habits. Selina, who is a sensible girl, has serious qualms on the subject."

"Then why not get out of it? I have no objection to run the risk, and if you like to transact with me, I will pay you ready money for every share you have at the present market price."

Sawley writhed uneasily in his chair.

"Will you sell me five hundred, Mr. Sawley? Say the word and it is a bargain."

"A time-bargain?" quavered the coffin-maker.

"No. Money down, and scrip handed over."

"I—I can't. The fact is, my dear young friend, I have sold all my stock already!"

"Then permit me to ask, Mr. Sawley, what possible objection you can have to the present aspect of affairs? You do not surely suppose that we are going to issue new shares and bring down the market, simply because you have realised at a handsome premium?"

"A handsome premium! O Lord!" moaned Sawley.

"Why, what did you get for them?"

"Four, three, and two and a half."

"A very considerable profit indeed," said I; "and you ought to be abundantly thankful. We shall talk this matter over at another time, Mr. Sawley, but just now I must beg you to excuse me. I have a particular engagement this morning with my broker—rather a heavy transaction to settle—and so—"

"It 's no use beating about the bush any longer," said Mr. Sawley, in an excited tone, at the same time dashing down his crape-covered castor on the floor. "Did you ever see a ruined man with a large family? Look at me, Mr. Dunshunner—I 'm one, and you 've done it!"

"Mr. Sawley! are you in your senses?"

"That depends on circumstances. Have n't you been buying stock lately?"

"I am glad to say I have—two thousand Glen-

mutchkins, I think, and this is the day of delivery."

"Well then, can't you see how the matter stands? It was I who sold them!"

"Well!"

"Mother of Moses, sir! don't you see I 'm ruined?"

"By no means—but you must not swear. I pay over the money for your scrip, and you pocket a premium. It seems to me a very simple transaction."

"But I tell you I have n't got the scrip!" cried Sawley, gnashing his teeth, while the cold beads of perspiration gathered largely on his brow.

"That is very unfortunate! Have you lost it?"

"No! the devil tempted me, and I oversold!"

There was a very long pause, during which I assumed an aspect of serious and dignified rebuke.

"Is it possible?" said I, in a low tone, after the manner of Kean's offended fathers. "What! you, Mr. Sawley—the stoker's friend—the enemy of gambling—the father of Selina—condescend to so equivocal a transaction? You amaze me! But I never was the man to press heavily on a friend"—here Sawley brightened up. "Your secret is safe with me, and it shall be your own fault if it reaches the ears of the Session. Pay me over the difference at the present market price, and I release you of your obligation."

"Then I 'm in the Gazette, that 's all," said Sawley, doggedly, "and a wife and nine beautiful

babes upon the parish! I had hoped other things from you, Mr. Dunshunner—I thought you and Selina—"

"Nonsense, man! Nobody goes into the Gazette just now—it will be time enough when the general crash comes. Out with your cheque-book, and write me an order for four and twenty thousand. Confound fractions! in these days one can afford to be liberal."

"I have n't got it," said Sawley. "You have no idea how bad our trade has been of late, for nobody seems to think of dying. I have not sold a gross of coffins this fortnight. But I 'll tell you what—I 'll give you five thousand down in cash, and ten thousand in shares; further I can't go."

"Now, Mr. Sawley," said I, "I may be blamed by worldly-minded persons for what I am going to do; but I am a man of principle, and feel deeply for the situation of your amiable wife and family. I bear no malice, though it is quite clear that you intended to make me the sufferer. Pay me fifteen thousand over the counter, and we cry quits for ever."

"Won't you take Camlachie Cemetery shares? They are sure to go up."

"No!"

"Twelve hundred Cowcaddens Water, with an issue of new stock next week?"

"Not if they disseminated the Ganges!"

"A thousand Ramshorn Gas—four per cent. guaranteed until the act?"

"Not if they promised twenty, and melted down the sun in their retort!"

"Blawweary Iron? Best spec. going."

"No, I tell you once for all! If you don't like my offer,—and it is an uncommonly liberal one,—say so, and I 'll expose you this afternoon upon 'Change."

"Well then, there 's a cheque. But may the—"

"Stop, sir! Any such profane expressions, and I shall insist upon the original bargain. So then, now we 're quits. I wish you a very good-morning, Mr. Sawley, and better luck next time. Pray remember me to your amiable family."

The door had hardly closed upon the discomfited coffin-maker, and I was still in the preliminary steps of an extempore *pas seul*, intended as the outward demonstration of exceeding inward joy, when Bob M'Corkindale entered. I told him the result of the morning's conference.

"You have let him off too easily," said the political economist. "Had I been his creditor, I certainly should have sacked the shares into the bargain. There is nothing like rigid dealing between man and man."

"I am contented with moderate profits," said I; "besides, the image of Selina overcame me. How goes it with Jobson and Grabbie?"

"Jobson has paid, and Grabbie compounded. Heckles—may he die an evil death!—has repudiated, become a lame duck, and waddled; but no doubt his estate will pay a dividend."

"So then, we are clear of the whole Glenmutchkin business, and at a handsome profit."

"A fair interest for the outlay of capital—nothing more. But I 'm not quite done with the concern yet."

"How so? not another bearing operation?"

"No; that cock would hardly fight. But you forget that I am secretary to the company, and have a small account against them for services already rendered. I must do what I can to carry the bill through Parliament; and, as you have now sold your whole shares, I advise you to resign from the direction, go down straight to Glenmutchkin, and qualify yourself for a witness. We shall give you five guineas a day, and pay all your expenses."

"Not a bad notion. But what has become of M'Closkie, and the other fellow with the jaw-breaking name?"

"Vich-Induibh? I have looked after their interests as in duty bound, sold their shares at a large premium, and despatched them to their native hills on annuities."

"And Sir Polloxfen?"

"Died yesterday of spontaneous combustion."

As the company seemed breaking up, I thought I could not do better than take M'Corkindale's hint, and accordingly betook myself to Glenmutchkin, along with the Captain of M'Alcohol, and we quartered ourselves upon the Factor for Glentumblers. We found Watty Solder very shaky, and his assistant also lapsing into habits

of painful inebriety. We saw little of them except of an evening, for we shot and fished the whole day, and made ourselves remarkably comfortable. By singular good luck, the plans and sections were lodged in time, and the Board of Trade very handsomely reported in our favour, with a recommendation of what they were pleased to call "the Glenmutchkin system," and a hope that it might generally be carried out. What this system was, I never clearly understood; but, of course, none of us had any objections. This circumstance gave an additional impetus to the shares, and they once more went up. I was, however, too cautious to plunge a second time into Charybdis, but M'Corkindale did, and again emerged with plunder.

When the time came for the parliamentary contest, we all emigrated to London. I still recollect, with lively satisfaction, the many pleasant days we spent in the metropolis at the company's expense. There were just a neat fifty of us, and we occupied the whole of a hotel. The discussion before the committee was long and formidable. We were opposed by four other companies who patronised lines, of which the nearest was at least a hundred miles distant from Glenmutchkin; but as they founded their opposition upon dissent from "the Glenmutchkin system" generally, the committee allowed them to be heard. We fought for three weeks a most desperate battle, and might in the end have been victorious, had not our last antagonist, at the very close of his case, pointed out

no less than seventy-three fatal errors in the parliamentary plan deposited by the unfortunate Solder. Why this was not done earlier, I never exactly understood; it may be that our opponents, with gentlemanly consideration, were unwilling to curtail our sojourn in London—and their own. The drama was now finally closed, and after all preliminary expenses were paid, sixpence per share was returned to the holders upon surrender of their scrip.

Such is an accurate history of the Origin, Rise, Progress, and Fall of the Direct Glenmutchkin Railway. It contains a deep moral, if anybody has sense enough to see it; if not, I have a new project in my eye for next session, of which timely notice shall be given.

THRAWN JANET

BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

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THE REVEREND MURDOCH SOULIS was long minister of the moorland parish of Balweary, in the vale of Dule. A severe, bleak-faced old man, dreadful to his hearers, he dwelt in the last years of his life, without relative or servant or any human company, in the small and lonely manse under the Hanging Shaw. In spite of the iron composure of his features, his eye was wild, scared, and uncertain; and when he dwelt, in private admonitions, on the future of the impenitent, it seemed as if his eye pierced through the storms of time to the terrors of eternity. Many young persons, coming to prepare themselves against the season of the holy communion, were dreadfully affected by his talk. He had a sermon on 1 Pet. v. 8, "The devil as a roaring lion," on the Sunday after every 17th of August, and he was accustomed to surpass himself upon that text both by the appalling nature of the matter and the terror of his bearing in the pulpit. The children were frightened into fits, and the old looked more than usually oracular, and were, all that day, full of those hints that Hamlet depre-

cated. The manse itself, where it stood by the water of Dule among some thick trees, with the Shaw overhanging it on the one side, and on the other many cold, moorish hilltops rising toward the sky, had begun, at a very early period of Mr. Soulis's ministry, to be avoided in the dusk hours by all who valued themselves upon their prudence; and guidmen sitting at the clachan alehouse shook their heads together at the thought of passing late by that uncanny neighbourhood. There was one spot, to be more particular, which was regarded with especial awe. The manse stood between the high-road and the water of Dule, with a gable to each; its back was toward the kirktown of Balweary, nearly half a mile away; in front of it, a bare garden, hedged with thorn, occupied the land between the river and the road. The house was two stories high, with two large rooms on each. It opened not directly on the garden, but on a causewayed path, or passage, giving on the road on the one hand, and closed on the other by the tall willows and elders that bordered on the stream. And it was this strip of causeway that enjoyed among the young parishioners of Balweary so infamous a reputation. The minister walked there often after dark, sometimes groaning aloud in the instancy of his unspoken prayers; and when he was from home, and the manse door was locked, the more daring school-boys ventured, with beating hearts, to "follow my leader" across that legendary spot.

This atmosphere of terror, surrounding, as it did,

a man of God of spotless character and orthodoxy, was a common cause of wonder and subject of inquiry among the few strangers who were led by chance or business into that unknown, outlying country. But many even of the people of the parish were ignorant of the strange events which had marked the first year of Mr. Soulis's ministrations; and among those who were better informed, some were naturally reticent, and others shy of that particular topic. Now and again, only, one of the older folk would warm into courage over his third tumbler, and recount the cause of the minister's strange looks and solitary life.

Fifty years syne, when Mr. Soulis cam' first into Ba'weary, he was still a young man,—a callant, the folk said,—fu' o' book-learnin' and grand at the exposition, but, as was natural in sae young a man, wi' nae leevin' experience in religion. The younger sort were greatly taken wi' his gifts and his gab; but auld, concerned, serious men and women were moved even to prayer for the young man, whom they took to be a self-deceiver, and the parish that was like to be sae ill supplied. It was before the days o' the Moderates—weary fa' them; but ill things are like guid—they baith come bit by bit, a pickle at a time; and there were folk even then that said the Lord had left the college professors to their ain devices, an' the lads that went to study wi' them wad hae done mair and better sittin' in a peat-bog, like their forebears of the persecution, wi'

a Bible under their oxter and a speerit o' prayer in their heart. There was nae doubt, onyway, but that Mr. Soulis had been ower-lang at the college. He was careful and troubled for mony things besides the ae thing needful. He had a feck o' books wi' him—mair than had ever been seen before in a' that presbytery; and a sair wark the carrier had wi' them, for they were a' like to have smoored in the Deil's Hag between this and Kilmackerlie. They were books o' divinity, to be sure, or so they ca'd them; but the serious were o' opinion there was little service for sae mony, when the hail o' God's Word would gang in the neuk of a plaid. Then he wad sit half the day and half the nicht forby, which was scant decent—writin', nae less; and first they were feard he wad read his sermons; and syne it proved he was writin' a book himsel', which was surely no fittin' for ane of his years an' sma' experience.

Onyway, it behooved him to get an auld, decent wife to keep the manse for him an' see to his bit denners; and he was recommended to an auld limmer,—Janet M'Clour, they ca'd her,—and sae far left to himsel' as to be ower-persuaded. There was mony advised him to the contrar', for Janet was mair than suspeckit by the best folk in Ba'weary. Lang or that, she had had a wean to a dragoon; she hadnae come forrit[1] for maybe thretty year; and bairns had seen her mumblin' to hersel' up on

[1] To "come forrit"—to offer one's self as a communicant.

Key's Loan in the gloamin', whilk was an unco time an' place for a God-fearin' woman. Howsoever, it was the laird himsel' that had first tauld the minister o' Janet; and in thae days he wad have gane a far gate to pleesure the laird. When folk tauld him that Janet was sib to the deil, it was a' superstition by his way of it; an' when they cast up the Bible to him, an' the witch of Endor, he wad threep it doun their thrapples that thir days were a' gane by, and the deil was mercifully restrained.

Weel, when it got about the clachan that Janet M'Clour was to be servant at the manse, the folk were fair mad wi' her an' him thegether; and some o' the guidwives had nae better to dae than get round her door-cheeks and chairge her wi' a' that was kent again' her, frae the sodger's bairn to John Tamson's twa kye. She was nae great speaker; folk usually let her gang her ain gait, an' she let them gang theirs, wi' neither fair guid-e'en nor fair guid-day; but when she buckled to, she had a tongue to deave the miller. Up she got, an' there wasnae an auld story in Ba'weary but she gart somebody lowp for it that day; they couldnae say ae thing but she could say twa to it; till, at the hinder end, the guidwives up and claught haud of her, and clawed the coats aff her back, and pu'd her doun the clachan to the water o' Dule, to see if she were a witch or no, soum or droun. The carline skirled till ye could hear her at the Hangin' Shaw, and she focht like ten; there

was mony a guid wife bure the mark of her neist day an' mony a lang day after; and just in the hettest o' the collieshangie, wha suld come up (for his sins) but the new minister.

"Women," said he (and he had a grand voice), "I charge you in the Lord's name to let her go."

Janet ran to him—she was fair wud wi' terror—an' clang to him, an' prayed him, for Christ's sake, save her frae the cummers; an' they, for their pairt, tauld him a' that was kent, and maybe mair.

"Woman," says he to Janet, "is this true?"

"As the Lord sees me," says she, "as the Lord made me, no a word o' 't. Forby the bairn," says she, "I 've been a decent woman a' my days."

"Will you," says Mr. Soulis, "in the name of God, and before me, His unworthy minister, renounce the devil and his works?"

Weel, it wad appear that, when he askit that, she gave a girn that fairly frichtit them that saw her, an' they could hear her teeth play dirl thegether in her chafts; but there was naething for it but the ae way or the ither; an' Janet lifted up her hand and renounced the deil before them a'.

"And now," says Mr. Soulis to the guidwives, "home with ye, one and all, and pray to God for His forgiveness."

And he gied Janet his arm, though she had little on her but a sark, and took her up the clachan to her ain door like a leddy of the land, an' her scrieghin' and laughin' as was a scandal to be heard.

There were mony grave folk lang ower their prayers that nicht; but when the morn cam' there was sic a fear fell upon a' Ba'weary that the bairns hid theirsel's, and even the men folk stood and keekit frae their doors. For there was Janet comin' doun the clachan,—her or her likeness, nane could tell,—wi' her neck thrawn, and her heid on ae side, like a body that has been hangit, and a girn on her face like an unstreakit corp. By-an'-by they got used wi' it, and even speered at her to ken what was wrang; but frae that day forth she couldnae speak like a Christian woman, but slavered and played click wi' her teeth like a pair o' shears; and frae that day forth the name o' God cam' never on her lips. Whiles she wad try to say it, but it michtnae be. Them that kenned best said least; but they never gied that Thing the name o' Janet M'Clour; for the auld Janet, by their way o' 't, was in muckle hell that day. But the minister was neither to haud nor to bind; he preached about naething but the folk's cruelty that had gien her a stroke of the palsy; he skelpt the bairns that meddled her; and he had her up to the manse that same nicht, and dwalled there a' his lane wi' her under the Hangin' Shaw.

Weel, time gaed by, and the idler sort commenced to think mair lichtly o' that black business. The minister was weel thocht o'; he was aye late at the writing—folk wad see his can'le doon by the Dule Water after twal' at e'en; and he seemed pleased wi' himsel' and upsitten as at first, though

a' body could see that he was dwining. As for Janet, she cam' an' she gaed; if she didnae speak muckle afore, it was reason she should speak less then; she meddled naebody; but she was an eldritch thing to see, an' nane wad hae mistrysted wi' her for Ba'weary glebe.

About the end o' July there cam' a spell o' weather, the like o' 't never was in that country-side; it was lown an' het an' heartless; the herds couldnae win up the Black Hill, the bairns were ower-weariet to play; an' yet it was gousty too, wi' claps o' het wund that rummled in the glens, and bits o' shouers that slockened naething. We aye thocht it but to thun'er on the morn; but the morn cam', an' the morn's morning, and it was aye the same uncanny weather, sair on folks and bestial. Of a' that were the waur, nane suffered like Mr. Soulis; he could neither sleep nor eat, he tauld his elders; an' when he wasnae writin' at his weary book, he wad be stravaguin' ower a' the country-side like a man possessed, when a' body else was blithe to keep caller ben the house.

Abune Hangin' Shaw, in the bield o' the Black Hill, there 's a bit enclosed grund wi' an iron yett; and it seems, in the auld days, that was the kirk-yaird o' Ba'weary, and consecrated by the papists before the blessed licht shone upon the kingdom. It was a great howff, o' Mr. Soulis's onyway; there he would sit an' consider his sermons; and inded it 's a bieldy bit. Weel, as he came ower the wast

end o' the Black Hill, ae day, he saw first twa, an' syne fower, an' syne seeven corbie craws fleein' round an' round abune the auld kirkyaird. They flew laigh and heavy, an' squawked to ither as they gaed; and it was clear to Mr. Soulis that something had put them frae their ordinar. He wasnae easy fleyed, an' gaed straucht up to the wa's; and what suld he find there but a man, or the appearance of a man, sittin' in the inside upon a grave. He was of a great stature, an' black as hell, and his een were singular to see.[1] Mr. Soulis had heard tell o' black men, mony 's the time; but there was something unco about this black man that daunted him. Het as he was, he took a kind o' cauld grue in the marrow o' his banes; but up he spak' for a' that; an' says he, "My friend, are you a stranger in this place?" The black man answered never a word; he got upon his feet, an' begude to hirsel to the wa' on the far side; but he aye lookit at the minister; an' the minister stood an' lookit back; till a' in a meenute the black man was ower the wa' an' rinnin' for the bield o' the trees. Mr. Soulis, he hardly kenned why, ran after him; but he was sair forjaskit wi' his walk an' the het, unhalesome weather; and rin as he likit, he got nae mair than a glisk o' the black man amang the birks, till he won doun to the foot o' the hillside, an' there

[1] It was a common belief in Scotland that the devil appeared as a black man. This appears in several witch-trials, and, I think, in Law's "Memorials," that delightful storehouse of the quaint and grisly.

he saw him ance mair, gaun, hap, step, an' lowp, ower Dule Water to the manse.

Mr. Soulis wasnae weel pleased that this fearsome gangrel suld mak' sae free wi' Ba'weary manse; an' he ran the harder, an' wet shoon, ower the burn, an' up the walk; but the deil a black man was there to see. He stepped out upon the road, but there was naebody there; he gaed a' ower the gairden, but na, nae black man. At the hinder end, and a bit feard as was but natural, he lifted the hasp and into the manse; and there was Janet M'Clour before his een, wi' her thrawn craig, and nane sae pleased to see him. And he aye minded sinsyne, when first he set his een upon her, he had the same cauld and deidly grue.

"Janet," says he, "have you seen a black man?"

"A black man?" quo' she. "Save us a'! Ye 're no wise, minister. There 's nae black man in a' Ba'weary."

But she didnae speak plain, ye maun understand; but yam-yammered, like a powny wi' the bit in its moo.

"Weel," says he, "Janet, if there was nae black man, I have spoken with the Accuser of the Brethren."

And he sat down like ane wi' a fever, an' his teeth chittered in his heid.

"Hoots!" says she, "think shame to yoursel', minister," an' gied him a drap brandy that she keept aye by her.

Syne Mr. Soulis gaed into his study amang a'

his books. It 's a lang, laigh, mirk chalmer, perishin' cauld in winter, an' no very dry even in the top o' the simmer, for the manse stands near the burn. Sae doun he sat, and thocht of a' that had come an' gane since he was in Ba'weary, an' his hame, an' the days when he was a bairn an' ran daffin' on the braes; and that black man aye ran in his heid like the owercome of a sang. Aye the mair he thocht, the mair he thocht o' the black man. He tried the prayer, an' the words wouldnae come to him; an' he tried, they say, to write at his book, but he couldnae mak' nae mair o' that. There was whiles he thocht the black man was at his oxter, an' the swat stood upon him cauld as well-water; and there was other whiles when he cam' to himsel' like a christened bairn and minded naething.

The upshot was that he gaed to the window an' stood glowrin' at Dule Water. The trees are unco thick, an' the water lies deep an' black under the manse; and there was Janet washin' the cla'es wi' her coats kilted. She had her back to the minister, an' he, for his pairt, hardly kenned what he was lookin' at. Syne she turned round, an' shawed her face; Mr. Soulis had the same cauld grue as twice that day afore, an' it was borne in upon him what folk said, that Janet was deid lang syne, an' this was a bogle in her clay-cauld flesh. He drew back a pickle and he scanned her narrowly. She was tramp-trampin' in the cla'es, croonin' to hersel'; and eh! Gude guide us, but

it was a fearsome face. Whiles she sang louder, but there was nae man born o' woman that could tell the words o' her sang; an' whiles she lookit sidelang doun, but there was naething there for her to look at. There gaed a scunner through the flesh upon his banes; and that was Heeven's advertisement. But Mr. Soulis just blamed himsel', he said, to think sae ill of a puir auld afflicted wife that hadnae a freend forby himsel'; an' he put up a bit prayer for him an' her, an' drank a little caller water,—for his heart rose again' the meat,—an' gaed up to his naked bed in the gloaming.

That was a nicht that has never been forgotten in Ba'weary, the nicht o' the seeventeenth of August, seventeen hun'er' an' twal'. It had been het afore, as I hae said, but that nicht it was hetter than ever. The sun gaed doun amang unco-lookin' clouds; it fell as mirk as the pit; no a star, no a breath o' wund; ye couldnae see your han' afore your face, and even the auld folk cuist the covers frae their beds and lay pechin' for their breath. Wi' a' that he had upon his mind, it was gey and unlikely Mr. Soulis wad get muckle sleep. He lay an' he tummled; the gude, caller bed that he got into brunt his very banes; whiles he slept, and whiles he waukened; whiles he heard the time o' nicht, and whiles a tike yowlin' up the muir, as if somebody was deid: whiles he thocht he heard bogles claverin' in his lug, an' whiles he saw spunkies in the room. He behooved, he judged, to be

sick; an' sick he was—little he jaloosed the sickness.

At the hinder end, he got a clearness in his mind, sat up in his sark on the bedside, and fell thinkin' ance mair o' the black man an' Janet. He couldnae weel tell how,—maybe it was the cauld to his feet, —but it cam' in upon him wi' a spate that there was some connection between thir twa, an' that either or baith o' them were bogles. And just at that moment, in Janet's room, which was neist to his, there cam' a stramp o' feet as if men were wars'lin', an' then a loud bang; an' then a wund gaed reishling round the fower quarters of the house; an' then a' was ance mair as seelent as the grave.

Mr. Soulis was feard for neither man nor deevil. He got his tinder-box, an' lit a can'le, an' made three steps o' 't ower to Janet's door. It was on the hasp, an' he pushed it open, an' keeked bauldly in. It was a big room, as big as the minister's ain, an' plenished wi' grand, auld, solid gear, for he had naething else. There was a fower-posted bed wi' auld tapestry; and a braw cabinet of aik, that was fu' o' the minister's divinity books, an' put there to be out o' the gate; an' a wheen duds o' Janet's lying here and there about the floor But nae Janet could Mr. Soulis see, nor ony sign of a contention. In he gaed (an' there 's few that wad hae followed him), an' lookit a' round, an' listened. But there was naethin' to be heard neither inside the manse nor in a' Ba'weary parish, an' naethin'

to be seen but the muckle shadows turnin' round the can'le. An' then a' at aince the minister's heart played dunt an' stood stock-still, an' a cauld wund blew amang the hairs o' his heid. Whaten a weary sicht was that for the puir man's een! For there was Janet hangin' frae a nail beside the auld aik cabinet; her heid aye lay on her shouther, her een were steeked, the tongue projeckit frae her mouth, and her heels were twa feet clear abune the floor.

"God forgive us all!" thocht Mr. Soulis, "poor Janet 's dead."

He cam' a step nearer to the corp; an' then his heart fair whammled in his inside. For—by what cantrip it wad ill beseem a man to judge—she was hingin' frae a single nail an' by a single wursted thread for darnin' hose.

It 's an awfu' thing to be your lane at nicht wi' siccan prodigies o' darkness; but Mr. Soulis was strong in the Lord. He turned an' gaed his ways oot o' that room, and lockit the door ahint him; and step by step doon the stairs, as heavy as leed; and set doon the can'le on the table at the stair-foot. He couldnae pray, he couldnae think, he was dreepin' wi' caul' swat, an' naething could he hear but the dunt-dunt-duntin' o' his ain heart. He micht maybe have stood there an hour, or maybe twa, he minded sae little; when a' o' a sudden he heard a laigh, uncanny steer upstairs; a foot gaed to an' fro in the cham'er whaur the corp was hingin'; syne the door was opened,

though he minded weel that he had lockit it; an' syne there was a step upon the landin', an' it seemed to him as if the corp was lookin' ower the rail and doun upon him whaur he stood.

He took up the can'le again (for he couldnae want the licht), and, as saftly as ever he could, gaed straucht out o' the manse an' to the far end o' the causeway. It was aye pit-mirk; the flame o' the can'le, when he set it on the grund, brunt steedy and clear as in a room; naething moved, but the Dule Water seepin' and sabbin' doon the glen, an' yon unhaly footstep that cam' ploddin' doun the stairs inside the manse. He kenned the foot ower-weel, for it was Janet's; and at ilka step that cam' a wee thing nearer, the cauld got deeper in his vitals. He commended his soul to Him that made an' keepit him; "and, O Lord," said he, "give me strength this night to war against the powers of evil."

By this time the foot was comin' through the passage for the door; he could hear a hand skirt alang the wa', as if the fearsome thing was feelin' for its way. The saughs tossed an' maned thegether, a long sigh cam' ower the hills, the flame o' the can'le was blawn aboot; an' there stood the corp of Thrawn Janet, wi' her grogram goun an' her black mutch, wi' the heid aye upon the shouther, an' the girn still upon the face o' 't,—leevin', ye wad hae said—deid, as Mr. Soulis weel kenned,—upon the threshold o' the manse.

It 's a strange thing that the saul of man should

be that thirled into his perishable body; but the minister saw that, an' his heart didnae break.

She didnae stand there lang; she began to move again, an' cam' slowly toward Mr. Soulis whaur he stood under the saughs. A' the life o' his body, a' the strength o' his speerit, were glowerin' frae his een. It seemed she was gaun to speak, but wanted words, an' made a sign wi' the left hand. There cam' a clap o' wund, like a cat's fuff; oot gaed the can'le, the saughs skrieghed like folk; an' Mr. Soulis kenned that, live or die, this was the end o' 't.

"Witch, beldam, devil!" he cried, "I charge you, by the power of God, begone—if you be dead, to the grave; if you be damned, to hell."

An' at that moment the Lord's ain hand out o' the heevens struck the Horror whaur it stood; the auld, deid, desecrated corp o' the witch-wife, sae lang keepit frae the grave and hirselled round by deils, lowed up like a brunstane spunk and fell in ashes to the grund; the thunder followed, peal on dirling peal, the rairing rain upon the back o' that; and Mr. Soulis lowped through the garden hedge, and ran, wi' skelloch upon skelloch, for the clachan.

That same mornin' John Christie saw the black man pass the Muckle Cairn as it was chappin' six; before eicht, he gaed by the change-house at Knockdow; an' no lang after, Sandy M'Lellan saw him gaun linkin' doun the braes frae Kilmackerlie. There 's little doubt but it was him that

dwalled sae lang in Janet's body; but he was awa' at last; and sinsyne the deil has never fashed us in Ba'weary.

But it was a sair dispensation for the minister; lang, lang he lay ravin' in his bed; and frae that hour to this, he was the man ye ken the day.